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King Lear - King Lear.



SHAKESPEARE  
SCENES AND CHARACTERS.

*A SERIES OF ILLUSTRATIONS.*

Designed by

ADAMO, HOFMANN, MAKART, PECHT, SCHWOERER, AND SPIESS;

Engraved on Steel by

BANKEL, BAUER, GOLDBERG, RAAB, AND SCHMIDT.

*WITH EXPLANATORY TEXT*

SELECTED AND ARRANGED BY

PROFESSOR E. DOWDEN, LL.D.

AUTHOR OF "SHAKSPERE, A STUDY OF HIS MIND AND ART."

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## PREFACE.

GERMANY, which has so largely contributed to the scholarly study of Shakespeare, has also made some remarkable contributions to the pictorial illustration of his plays. The designs of Retzsch became widely known, and were distinguished by a certain intensity or at least eagerness of spirit, by effective scenic qualities, and sometimes by a keen intellectuality at work upon particular points. But all in Shakespeare that is massive, sane, and calm was for Retzsch as though it had no existence. Kaulbach found in three or four plays subjects for several of his ambitious and learned compositions, in which human passion is built into the structure of the work, as one element of a large and elaborate design. The artist is never carried away by his visionary power; rather he subdues the subject by virtue of energy of will and learning, and a masterly, if academical, constructive power. The present volume contains the designs of not one but several distinguished living artists of Germany, and may be considered in a measure to represent the contemporary art-movement of that country. Munich must be regarded as the centre around which the artists whose work appears in this volume are grouped, but each has his own distinctive traits, and they have been brought under the influence,—one in Rome, another in Paris, a third in the Dresden Galleries,—of various art-methods, ideas, and traditions.

A few words, derived from a German source, on each of the artists whose work appears in the following pages may be of interest to the reader. Max Adamo belongs to Munich both by his birth and art-training. At first under the influence of Schwind and Kaulbach, and treating historical subjects, he acquired distinction by his frescoes

in the National Museum. With a growing sense of the need of a more positive realization of fact by means of art he passed over to the naturalistic school of Piloty. His *Alva condemning Netherlanders to death* attracted much attention by its dramatic power and admirable feeling for colour. The *Seizure of Robespierre and his Companions* exhibited a further advance, and he has been recently engaged upon a work in the same manner representing *The Expulsion by Cromwell of the Long Parliament*.

Heinrich Hofmann, who holds a Professorship in the Academy at Dresden, was born in Darmstadt, and after receiving in that city his early education as an artist, transferred himself to the Antwerp Academy. The somewhat timid naturalism of the Belgian school was little in harmony with his genius, and accordingly he left Antwerp, and came to Dresden with a view of studying the Venetian paintings in the Dresden Gallery. Several admirable portraits testify to the gain derived from this study. In Italy, and still finding his masters in the great Venetian painters, Hofmann devoted himself to sacred art, and has since combined with the work of a portrait painter the treatment of ideal subjects. His pictures, in which the figures are life-size, from the *Merchant of Venice*, *Othello*, *The Tempest*, and *Romeo and Juliet* are the originals from which with certain alterations he has furnished designs for the present volume.

Hans Makart is recognised as the greatest natural force which has appeared in the modern German school of painting, and the most remarkable colourist of the Continent since Delacroix. Son of the keeper of the plate (*Silberbeschliesserin*) at the Court of the widowed Empress, at Salzburg, the boy had early opportunity of filling his fancy with those images of splendour and luxury, in the representation of which he was subsequently to surpass all his contemporaries. While still in early youth, in 1864, he entered the school of Piloty at Munich, and there manifested an original gift so remarkable, and at the same time so great technical mastery of his art, that he rather transformed the school than was transformed by it, and exercised even over his master a very decided influence. His first large picture, *A Sicsta of Venetian Nobles*, exhibited so peculiar a glow of feeling, of fancy and of colour, that his great future seemed already secure. This was shortly afterwards followed by the humorous picture from the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, the chief group of which he has rehandled for our Shakespeare Scenes. *Modern Amoretti*, a frieze-like composition of playing children, life-size, added

to his fame. The celebrated *Seven Deadly Sins*, or the *Plague in Florence*, excited an uproar through all Germany, and, after its exclusion from the Salon at Paris, passed in triumphal procession through the chief cities of Europe. The Austrian Emperor now assigned to Makart a studio, house, and garden in Vienna, which became a *rendezvous* of the aristocracy of birth and wealth in the city. At the International Exhibition at Vienna, Makart's colossal painting *Catharina Cornaro*, reminding the spectator now of Paul Veronese, and now of Rubens, attracted more attention than any other work exhibited. Deficient as he is in emotional depth and in spirituality, Makart remains incontestably one of the most remarkable phenomena in modern European art.

F. Pecht is known alike as an artist and a man of letters. From his birth-place, Constance, he passed successively to Munich, to Dresden, to Leipzig, being engaged in the practice of lithography and in portrait painting. At Paris he came under the influence of Paul Delaroche. From 1848 onwards he spent three years in England, and finally settled in Munich. A series of paintings from subjects suggested by the lives of Goethe and Schiller was succeeded by the illustration of their works and of those of Lessing in the Schiller, Goethe, and Lessing Galleries issued under either Pecht's sole superintendence or in joint editorship with A. von Ramberg. The present Shakespeare Scenes may be looked upon as a continuation of these works. As a critic he has on various occasions been of service in calling attention to the works of rising artists of the Munich school. In the Munich "Maximilianeum" may be seen twelve figures of warriors and statesmen, more than life-size, which serve as examples of Pecht's work in fresco. At present he is engaged together with Schwoerer in adorning the Council-Hall at Constance with frescoes representing the history of the old imperial town, and especially the period of the famous Council of 1414-18.

F. Schwoerer, a scholar of Foltz in the Munich Academy, passed thence first to Antwerp and from Antwerp to Paris, where he worked in the *atelier* of Yvon. Having returned to Munich he painted in the National Museum in fresco some scenes from Bavarian history. His work is characterized by its refined and yet brilliant colouring, and by great beauty of composition,—qualities which manifest themselves in a remarkable degree in the artist's frescoes for the Council-Hall at Constance.

A. Spiess of Munich, formerly a pupil of Schwind, is remarkable as uniting a devotion to strict and noble form with a refined naturalism in art, and thus he may be viewed as a mediator between the tendencies of the older school of Cornelius and the present realistic tendency of Munich art. His works are choice rather than numerous. In the entrance-hall of the Munich "Maximilianeum" will be found a train of floating female figures painted by A. Spiess and his lately-deceased brother Heinrich. He has recently been engaged upon paintings for the new Dresden theatre. The illustrations contributed to the present volume faithfully represent the peculiar gifts of the artist.

So much—from a German source—with reference to the artists. The German letter-press of the *Shakespeare-Gallerie* was furnished by Herr Pecht, and consists of a pleasant and cultured little *causerie* on each of the plays illustrated by the designers. These essays, though bright and genial, seemed more suitable to the German than to the English reader, and it was thought that their place could with some advantage be supplied by a select body of extracts from the best writers, English, American, French and German, who have contributed to the criticism of Shakespeare. How large and illustrious a circle of writers has been here brought together will appear from a glance at the Index. No such body of Shakespearian illustration has heretofore been made (for Drake's *Memorials of Shakespeare*, published in 1828, is of comparatively narrow range), and it is hoped that the reader will accept as something better than "padding" some of the most admirable passages from the Shakespeare criticism of Bucknill, C. C. Clarke, Coleridge (S. T., and Hartley), De Quincey, Fletcher, Furnivall, Hazlitt, Hudson, Mrs. Jameson, Charles Knight, Lamb, W. W. Lloyd, Maginn, Ruskin, Mrs. Siddons, Spedding, Spalding, Swinburne, Archbishop Trench, Grant White, and others, representing England and America; Charles, Guizot, Hugo, Lamartine, Mézières, Taine, representing France; Elze, Goethe, Gervinus, Heine, Kreyssig, Rötcher, Schlegel, Ulrici, representing Germany.

In selecting the extracts the editor has been guided by the desire, first to illustrate the engraving, with special reference to the principal persons of the play there represented; secondly, to offer some general views of importance suggested by the play; and thirdly, to give examples of the different schools of Shakespearian criticism. With this last-mentioned object some few passages have been admitted which would

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otherwise not have found a place in the collection. The illustrations have been arranged, as far as was found convenient, in accordance with the chronological order in which the plays to which they belong were produced. This fact will explain the motive for the selection of certain extracts. Thus, under the heads of *Cymbeline*, *The Tempest*, and *The Winter's Tale* will be found notices of the characteristics of the last period of Shakespeare's dramatic career, and of the closing years of his life.

The thanks of the publishers are due to the authors who have granted permission to make use of their writings for the purposes of this volume.





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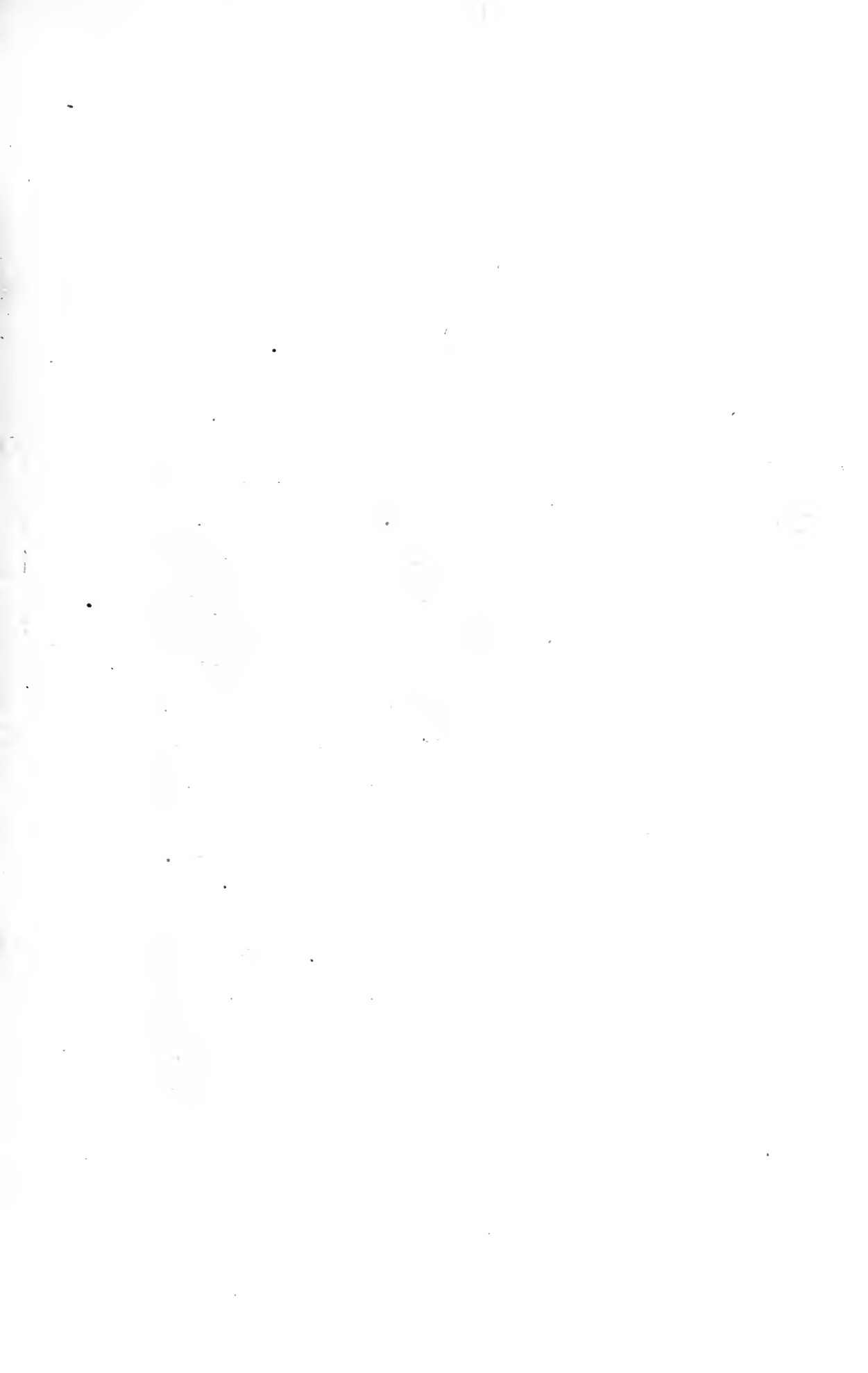
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T. Schirmer del.

Reichky sc.

Ein Sommernachts Traum - F. Hebbelmann's Nights Dream.



## SHAKESPEARIAN GALLERY.

### A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.

ACT II.

SCENE II. *Another Part of the Wood.*

*Enter TITANIA, with her train.*

*Tita.* Come, now a roundel and a fairy song ;  
Then, for the third part of a minute, hence ;  
Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds,  
Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings,  
To make my small elves coats, and some keep  
back

The clamorous owl that nightly hoots and wonders

At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep ;  
Then to your offices and let me rest.

*The Fairies sing.*

You spotted snakes with double tongue,  
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen ;  
Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong,  
Come not near our fairy queen.  
Philomel, with melody  
Sing in our sweet lullaby ;

Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby :  
Never harm,

Nor spell nor charm,  
Come our lovely lady nigh ;  
So, good night, with lullaby.

Weaving spiders, come not here ;  
Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence !  
Beetles black, approach not near ;  
Worm nor snail, do no offence.  
Philomel, with melody, &c.

*A Fairy.* Hence, away ! now all is well :  
One aloof stand sentinel.

*[Exeunt Fairies. Titania sleeps.]*

*Enter OBERON, and squeezes the flower on  
Titania's eyelids.*

*Obe,* What thou seest when thou dost wake,  
Do it for thy true-love take,  
Love and languish for his sake :  
Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,  
Pard, or boar with bristled hair,  
In thy eye that shall appear  
When thou wakest, it is thy dear :  
Wake when some vile thing is near.

*[Exit.]*

### A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.

IT seems that *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was produced, in part at least, at an earlier period of Shakespeare's life than his twenty-ninth year. Although as a whole it is the most exquisite, the daintiest and most fanciful creation that exists in poetry, and abounds in passages worthy even of Shakespeare in his full maturity, it also contains whole scenes which are hardly worthy of his apprentice hand, that wrought *Love's Labours Lost*, *The Two*

*Gentlemen of Verona*, and *The Comedy of Errors*, and which yet seem to bear the unmistakable marks of his unmistakable pen. These scenes are the various interviews between *Demetrius* and *Lysander*, *Hermia* and *Helena* in Acts II. and III. It is difficult to believe that such lines as,

“ Do not say so, Lysander ; say not so.  
What though he love your Hermia ! *Lord what though ?* ”

“ When at your hands did I deserve this scorn ?  
Is't not enough, is't not enough, *young man*,  
That I did never, no, nor ever can,” &c.—ACT II. SCENE I.

—it is difficult to believe that these, and many others of a like character which accompany them, were written by Shakespeare after he had produced even *Venus and Adonis* and the plays mentioned above, and when he could write the poetry of other parts of this very comedy. There seems, therefore, warrant for the opinion that this Dream was one of the very first conceptions of the young poet ; that living in a rural district where tales of household fairies were rife among his neighbours, memories of these were blended in his youthful reveries with images of the classic heroes that he found in the books which we know he read so eagerly ; that perhaps on some midsummer's night he, in very deed, did dream a dream and see a vision of this comedy, and went from Stratford up to London with it partly written ; that, when there, he found it necessary at first to forego the completion of it for labour that would find readier acceptance at the theatre ; and that afterward, when he had more freedom of choice, he reverted to his early production and in 1594 worked it up into the form in which it was produced. It seems to me that in spite of the silence of the quarto title-pages on the subject, this might have been done, or at least that some additions might have been made to the play for a performance at Court. The famous allusion to Queen Elizabeth as a “ fair vestal throned by the west,” tends to confirm me in that opinion. Shakespeare never worked for nothing ; and besides, could he, could any man, have the heart to waste so exquisite a compliment as that is, and to such a woman as Queen Elizabeth, by uttering it behind her back ?

RICHARD GRANT WHITE.—*Works of Shakespeare*, Vol. IV. pp. 16, 17.

### SHAKESPEARE'S FAIRY WORLD.

THAT which Shakespeare received in the rough form of fragmentary popular belief, he developed in his playful creation into a beautiful and regulated world. He here in a measure deserves the merit which Herodotus ascribes to Homer ; as the Greek

poet has created the great abode of the gods and its Olympic inhabitants, so Shakespeare has given form and place to the fairy kingdom, and with the natural creative power of genius, he has breathed a soul into his merry little citizens, which imparts a living centre to their nature and their office, their behaviour and their doings. He has given embodied form to the invisible, and life to the dead, and has thus striven for the poet's greatest glory; . . . he has clothed in bodily form those intangible phantoms, the bringers of dreams of provoking jugglery, of sweet soothing, and of tormenting raillery; and the task he has thus accomplished we shall only rightly estimate, when we have taken into account the severe design and inner congruity of this little world.

If it were Shakespeare's object expressly to remove from the fairies that dark ghost-like character (Act III. Scene 2) in which they appeared in Scandinavian and Scottish fable, if it were his desire to portray them as kindly beings in a merry, harmless relation to mortals, if he wished, in their essential office as bringers of dreams, to fashion them in their nature as personified dreams, he carried out this object in wonderful harmony both as regards their actions and their condition. The kingdom of the fairy beings is placed in the aromatic flower-scented Indies, in the land where mortals live in a half-dreamy state. From hence they come, "following darkness," as Puck says, "like a dream." Airy and swift, like the moon, they circle the earth, they avoid the sunlight without fearing it and seek the darkness, they love the moon and dance in her beams, and above all they delight in the dusk and twilight, the very season for dreams, whether waking or asleep. They send and bring dreams to mortals; and we need only recall to mind the description of the fairies' midwife, Queen Mab, in *Romeo and Juliet*, a piece nearly of the same date with the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, to discover that this is the charge essentially assigned to them, and the very means by which they influence mortals. Full of deep thought it is then, how Shakespeare has fashioned their inner character in harmony with this outer function. He depicts them as beings without delicate feeling and without morality, just as in dreams we meet with no check to our tender sensations, and are without moral impulse and responsibility. Careless and unscrupulous, they tempt mortals to infidelity; the effects of the mistakes which they have contrived make no impression on their minds; they feel no sympathy for the deep affliction of the lovers, but only delight and marvel over their mistakes and their foolish demeanour. The poet farther depicts his fairies as being of no high intellectual development. Whoever attentively reads their parts, will find that nowhere is reflection imparted to them. Only in one exception does Puck make a sententious remark upon the infidelity of man, and whoever has penetrated into the nature of these beings will immediately feel that it is out of harmony. Directly, they can make no inward impression upon mortals; their influence over the mind is not spiritual, but throughout material, effected by means of vision, metamorphosis, and

imitation. Titania has no spiritual association with her friend, but mere delight in her beauty, her "swimming gait," and her powers of imitation. When she awakes from her vision, there is no reflection: "Methought I was enamoured of an ass," she says; "Oh how mine eyes do hate this visage now!" She is only affected by the idea of the actual and the visible. There is no scene of reconciliation with her husband; her resentment consists in separation, her reconciliation in a dance; there is no trace of reflection, no indication of feeling. Thus, to remind Puck of a past event, no abstract date sufficed, but an accompanying indication perceptible to the senses was required. They are represented, these little gods, as natural souls, without the higher human capacities of mind, lords of a kingdom not of reason and morality, but of imagination and ideas conveyed by the senses; and thus they are uniformly the vehicle of the fancy, which produces the delusions of love and dreams. Their will, therefore, only extends to the corporeal. They lead a luxurious, merry life, given up to the pleasure of the senses; the secrets of nature, the powers of flowers and herbs, are confided to them. To sleep in flowers, lulled with dances and songs, with the wings of painted butterflies to fan the moonbeams from their eyes, this is their pleasure; the gorgeous apparel of flowers and dewdrops are their joy; when Titania wishes to allure her beloved, she offers him honey, apricocks, purple grapes and dancing. This life of sense and nature they season by the power of fancy, with delight in and desires after all that is most choice, most beautiful, and agreeable. They harmonize with nightingales and butterflies; they wage war with all ugly creatures, with hedgehogs, spiders, and bats; dancing, play, and song are their greatest pleasures; they steal lovely children, and substitute changelings; they torment decrepit old age, toothless gossips, aunts, and the awkward company of the players of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, but they love and recompense all that is pure and pretty. Thus was it of old in the popular traditions; the characteristic trait that they favour honesty among mortals and persecute crime, Shakespeare certainly borrowed from these traditions in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, but not in this piece. The sense of the beautiful is the one thing that elevates the fairies not only above the beasts, but also above the low mortal, when he is devoid of all fancy and uninfluenced by beauty. Thus in the spirit of the fairies, in which this sense of the beautiful is so refined, it is intensely ludicrous that the elegant Titania should fall in love with an ass's head. The only pain which agitates these beings is jealousy, the desire of possessing the beautiful sooner than others; they shun the distorting quarrel; their steadfast aim and longing is for undisturbed enjoyment. But in this sweet jugglery they neither appear constant to mortals, nor do they carry on intercourse among themselves in monotonous harmony. They are full also of wanton tricks and railleries, playing upon themselves and mortals pranks which never hurt but which often torment. This is especially the property of Puck, who jests to Oberon, who is the "lob" at this court, a coarser goblin, represented with broom or threshing flail, in a leathern dress and with a dark coun-

tenance, a roguish but awkward fellow, skilful at all transformations, practised in wilful tricks, but also clumsy enough to make mistakes and blunders contrary to his intention.

G. G. GERVINUS.—*Shakespeare Commentaries*. Translated by F. E. Bunnett, (ed. 1863), Vol. I. pp. 270-274.<sup>1</sup>

### BOTTOM THE WEAVER, AND TITANIA.

THE mermaid chaunting on the back of her dolphin; the fair vestal throned in the west; the bank blowing with wild thyme and decked with oxlip and nodding violet; the roundelay of the fairies singing their queen to sleep; and a hundred images beside of aërial grace and mythic beauty are showered upon us; and in the midst of these splendours is tumbled in Bottom the weaver, blockhead by original formation, and rendered doubly ridiculous by his partial change into a literal jackass. He, the most unfitted for the scene of all conceivable personages, makes his appearance, not as one to be expelled with loathing and derision, but to be instantly accepted as the chosen lover of the Queen of the Fairies. The gallant train of Theseus traverse the forest, but they are not the objects of such fortune. The lady, under the oppression of the glamour cast upon her eyes by the juice of love-in-idleness, reserves her raptures for an absurd clown. Such are the tricks of Fortune.

Oberon, himself, angry as he is with the caprices of his queen, does not anticipate any such object for her charmed affections. He is determined that she is to be captivated by "some vile thing," but he thinks only of

"Ounce, or cat, or bear,  
Pard, or boar with bristled hair,"

animals suggesting ideas of spite or terror; but he does not dream that, under the superintendence of Puck, spirit of mischief, she is to be enamoured of the head of an ass surmounting the body of a weaver. It is so nevertheless; and the love of the lady is as desperate as the deformity of her choice. He is an angel that wakes her from her flowery bed; a gentle mortal, whose enchanting note wins her ear, while his beauteous shape enthralls her eye; one who is as wise as he is beautiful; one for whom all the magic treasures of the fairy kingdom are to be with surpassing profusion dispensed. For him she gathers whatever wealth and delicacies the Land of Faery can boast. Her most airy spirits are ordered to be kind and courteous to this *gentleman*,—for

<sup>1</sup> In this and subsequent extracts from Ger- |  
vinus's *Commentaries*, the edition of 1875 has |  
been compared, and all needful corrections |  
embodied.

into that impossible character has the blindness of her love transmuted the clumsy and conceited clown. Apricocks and dewberries, purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries, are to feed his coarse palate; the thighs of bees kindled at the eyes of fiery glow-worms are to light him to his flower-decked bed; wings from painted butterflies are to fan the moonbeams from him as he sleeps; and in the very desperation of her intoxicating passion she feels that there is nothing which should not be yielded to the strange idol of her soul. She mourns over the restraints which separate her from the object of her burning affection, and thinks that the moon and the flowers participate in her sorrow.

“The moon, methinks, looks with a watery eye,  
And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,  
Lamenting some enforced chastity.”

Abstracting the poetry, we see the same thing every day in the plain prose of the world. Many is the Titania driven by some unintelligible magic so to waste her love. Some juice, potent as that of Puck—the true Cupid of such errant passions—often converts in the eyes of woman the grossest defects into resistless charms.

WILLIAM MAGINN.—*Shakespeare Papers*, pp. 133—135.

### LIFE A DREAM—THE “GROUND-IDEA” OF THE PLAY.<sup>1</sup>

THE marriage festival of Theseus and Hippolyta surrounds the whole picture as with a splendid frame of gold. Within it the sports and gambols of the elves and fairies, crossing and recrossing the story of the lovers, and the labours of the theatrical artizans, connect together these two different groups, while the blessings which at the end of the piece they bestow by their presence at the nuptial festival upon the house and lineage of Theseus, give reason and dignity to the part which they have been playing throughout.

The particular modification of the general comic view which results from this ironical parodying of all the domains of life at once determines and gives expression to the special ground-idea which first reduces the whole into organic unity. Life is throughout regarded in the light of a *Midsummer-Night's Dream*. With the rapidity of wit the merry piece passes like a dream over our minds; the most rare and motley elements, and the most fantastic shapes, are blended together as in a vision of the night, and form a whole highly wonderful both in form and composition. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Ulrici, in his laborious and scholarly work, attempts to discover a central idea in each of Shakespeare's plays—a method of criticism more

acceptable to German than to English Shakespeare students.

To look upon life as a dream is no new idea in poetry. In the ideal and poetical philosophy of Plato it is represented in this light, where he supposes the soul of man to possess an obscure memory of an earlier and truer sphere of existence, out of which it spins in this life a motley web of truth and falsehood. Calderon, too, has treated the same idea in a serious, but not properly tragic drama. To treat it seriously, however, is obviously a mistake in art. For, in sober truth, human life is no dream, nor was it in truth regarded as such by Plato. . . .

Because, then, Shakespeare has regarded human life in this play as a dream, he is right in denying to it both reason and order. In conformity with such a view the mind seems to have lost its self-consciousness, while all the other faculties, such as feeling and fancy, wit and humour, are allowed the fullest scope and license. With the withdrawal of mental order and reason, the intrinsic connection of the outer world, and consequently its truth and reality also, are overthrown. Life appears in travesty; the most ill-assorted elements, the oddest shapes and events which mock reality, dance and whirl about in the strangest confusion. The whole appears a cheat and delusion, which flits before us without form or substance. At last, however, the dialectic of irony which reigns within the comic view assorts the heterogeneous elements; the strange and wonderful creations vanish and dissolve into the ordinary forms of reality; order is finally restored, and out of the entangled web, right and reason result.

DR. HERMANN ULRICH.—*Shakespeare's Dramatic Art*, 1839. Translated  
by A. J. W. M. London, 1846. pp. 272—274.

FIRST PART OF  
KING HENRY VI.

ACT I.

SCENE II. *France. Before Orleans.*

CHARLES the Dauphin, REIGNIER, and  
ALENÇON.

*Enter the BASTARD of Orleans.*

*Bast.* Where's the Prince Dauphin? I have  
news for him.

*Char.* Bastard of Orleans, thrice welcome to  
us.

*Bast.* Methinks your looks are sad, your  
cheer appall'd :

Hath the late overthrow wrought this offence?  
Be not dismay'd, for succour is at hand :  
A holy maid hither with me I bring,  
Which by a vision sent to her from heaven  
Ordained is to raise this tedious siege  
And drive the English forth the bounds of  
France.

The spirit of deep prophecy she hath,  
Exceeding the nine sibyls of old Rome :  
What's past and what's to come she can descry.  
Speak, shall I call her in? Believe my words,  
For they are certain and unfallible.

*Char.* Go, call her in. [*Exit Bastard*] But  
first, to try her skill,

Reignier, stand thou as Dauphin in my place :  
Question her proudly ; let thy looks be stern :  
By this means shall we sound what skill she  
hath.

*Re-enter the BASTARD of Orleans, with JOAN  
LA PUCELLE.*

*Reig.* Fair maid, is't thou wilt do these won-  
drous feats?

*Puc.* Reignier, is't thou that thinkest to  
beguile me?

Where is the Dauphin? Come, come from  
behind ;

I know thee well, though never seen before.  
Be not amazed, there's nothing hid from me :  
In private will I talk with thee apart.

Stand back, you lords, and give us leave awhile.

*Reig.* She takes upon her bravely at first dash.

*Puc.* Dauphin, I am by birth a shepherd's  
daughter,

My wit untrain'd in any kind of art.

Heaven and our Lady gracious hath it pleased

To shine on my contemptible estate :

Lo, whilst I waited on my tender lambs,

And to sun's parching heat display'd my cheeks,

God's mother deigned to appear to me

And in a vision full of majesty

Will'd me to leave my base vocation

And free my country from calamity :

Her aid she promised and assured success :

In complete glory she reveal'd herself ;

And, whereas I was black and swart before,

With those clear rays which she infused on me

That beauty am I bless'd with which you see.

Ask me what question thou canst possible,

And I will answer unpremeditated :

My courage try by combat, if thou darest,

And thou shalt find that I exceed my sex.

Resolve on this, thou shalt be fortunate,

If thou receive me for thy warlike mate.

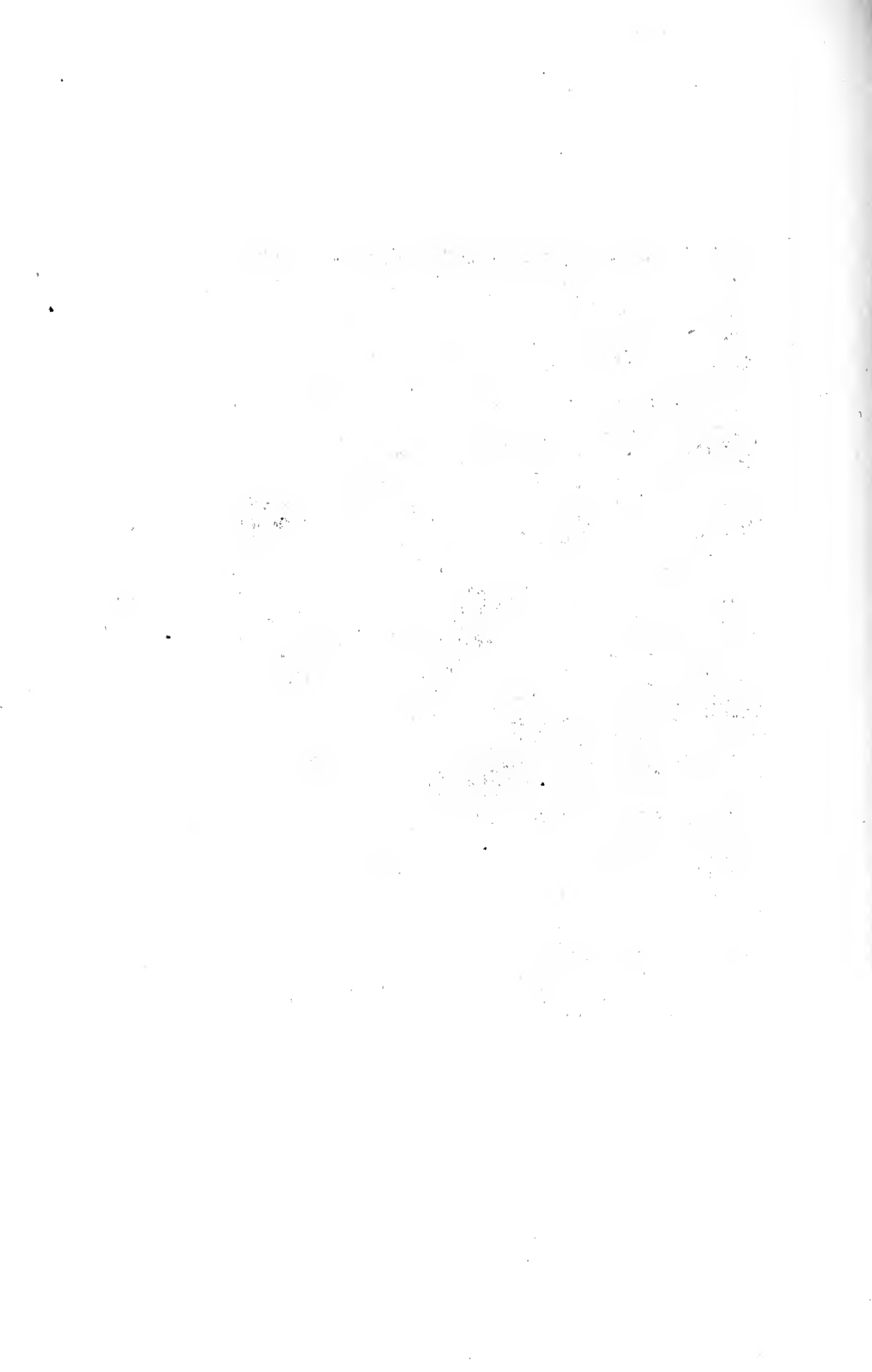




Fr. Sicht del

Joh. Bauer sc

König Heinrich VI. Erster Theil — King Henry VI. First Part 2



AUTHORSHIP OF THE FIRST PART OF HENRY VI.<sup>1</sup>

THE precise nature of Shakespeare's connection with the three parts of *King Henry VI.* forms the most perplexing problem in the history of his dramas. It is a subject which has already undergone considerable discussion, and yet may be said to be still wholly undecided; and it is, at the same time, one which possesses a larger amount of interest than is usual in the questions on which the commentators have been divided, from the special relation which it bears to the early development of the poet's genius, and the history of our dramatic literature at the critical period of the commencement of the last decade of the sixteenth century. . . .

The immediate object of the whole controversy is to ascertain how far Shakespeare was the author of any one, or of the whole, of these dramas, and the main element in the consideration of that question is the publication of two old plays, which look like early versions of the Second and Third Parts of *King Henry VI.*, as they have reached us in the Shakespeare Folio of 1623. The First Part of this dramatic series, however, appeared for the first time in that volume. . . .

No student of our great dramatist will be surprised to learn that at first he formed his style, in a great measure, on that of the writers whom he found in possession of the stage; and it may, we think, be doubted whether he ever sufficiently escaped from their influence. That imitative spirit, however, was of necessity most powerful at the commencement of his career. He was by temperament specially averse to all eccentric self-display; and the whole history of his genius shows us that it unfolded itself gradually, and in wonderful harmony with all the immediate conditions of the every-day world around him. We have no hesitation in stating that, if we had had transmitted to us those works only in which his peculiar manner is generally and distinctly traceable, we should take it for granted that the fruits of his earliest labours had perished; while if, on the other hand, we should find that in a number of early productions, to which any credible tradition had attached his name, the manifestations, however imperfect, of his special dramatic power seemed to be mingled with the feebleness and the extravagance which characterised all the dramas of his age, we should at once conclude that they fulfilled all the conditions which would most naturally justify us in ascribing them to his hand. . . .

There are passages in it [First Part of *Henry VI.*] which we must all feel unwilling to associate with the name of our great poet; and this natural feeling exercises, perhaps, a much greater influence over the minds of most readers in the consideration of this

<sup>1</sup> The generally received opinion is that the play was written by some predecessor or early contemporary of Shakespeare, and was revised by him, receiving at the same time certain added scenes. It will be seen that the writer of the extract quoted is of a different opinion.

question, than the minute reasoning of more formal and elaborate criticism. The feeble and tumid extravagance of many of the addresses greatly contributes to create this impression. That quality is peculiarly distinguishable in the general representation of the character of Talbot. The author of the play, whoever he was, in his anxiety to give prominence to his conception of this "terror of the French," has made him a sort of ogre, and has drawn the whole figure with a constant disregard of the restraints of nature and of common sense. This was, however, an error which was almost inevitable in an early production, and into which Shakespeare was at least as likely to be betrayed as any other imaginative writer that ever existed.

But the most offensive portion of this play, and the one in which we feel it most difficult to recognise the hand of Shakespeare is that which relates to the ultimate fate of Joan of Arc. There are reasons, however, why we think he may have been its author. It is manifest that if he wrote this play at all, he wrote it with a constant reference to the tastes and usages of his time, and hardly in any way in the spirit of original and creative genius. But this wonderful enthusiast could hardly as yet have been known in England, except as a sorceress and an agent of Satan; and we doubt whether it would have been possible to present her upon our stage in any other character . . . . The scenes between Talbot and his son (Act. iv., Scenes 5, 6, 7) have been often selected by critics as characteristic indications of the presence of Shakespeare's hand in this production. We confess, however, that although we can see in them glimpses of true pathos, we do not think they are at all executed in his finer and more unmistakable manner. They are throughout written in rhyme; and the truth, the force, and freedom of his dramatic imagination never find in that jingling form of versification a perfect expression. The scene in the Temple Garden, which furnished the emblem of the fatal quarrel of the Houses of York and Lancaster, seems to us much more decisively Shakespearian. It is distinguished by no small amount of that lightness and rapidity, and yet firmness of touch, which give, perhaps, the most inimitable of all its forms to the creations of imaginative genius. The interview between Margaret and Suffolk points, we think, to the same origin. Suffolk displays, in his first approach to the brilliant young beauty, much of the grace of Shakespeare's fancy; and in the subsequent perplexity of his sudden and guilty passion, we seem partially to catch that deep whisper of nature which so seldom strikes on our ears or our memories in any other pages than the dramas of Shakespeare.<sup>1</sup>

THOMAS KENNY.—*The Life and Genius of Shakespeare*,  
pp. 245—246, 252, 273—274.

<sup>1</sup> "In *Henry VI.* every reader will, I apprehend, see, like Gervinus, three hands, though all may not agree in the parts of the play they assign

to those hands. Reading it independently, though hastily, before I knew other folks' notions about it, I could not recognise Shakespeare's hand till

JOAN OF ARC AS REPRESENTED BY THE CHRONICLERS  
AND BY SHAKESPEARE.

THE representation which is given of the character of Joan of Arc, in the First Part of *Henry VI.*, has been ingeniously defined and commented on by one of the latest and best editors of Shakespeare, and one of his most genial critics. He says: "We find her described in the chronicles under every form of vituperation—'a monstrous woman,' 'a monster,' 'a romp,' 'a devilish witch and satanical enchantress,' 'an organ of the devil.' She was the main instrument through which England had lost France; and thus the people hated her memory. She claimed to be invested with supernatural powers, and thus her name was not only execrated but feared. Neither the patriotism nor the superstition of Shakespeare's age would have endured that the Pucelle should have been dismissed from the scene without vengeance taken on imagined crimes, or that confession should not be made by her, which should exculpate the authors of her death. Shakespeare has conducted her history up to the point when she is handed over to the stake. Other writers would have burned her upon the scene, and the audience would have shouted with the same delight that they felt when the Barrabas of Marlow was thrown into the cauldron. Shakespeare, following the historians, has made her utter a contradictory confession of one of the charges against her honour; but he has taken care to show that the brutality of her English persecutors forced from her an inconsistent avowal if it did not a false one, for the purpose of averting a cruel and instant death. In the treatment which she received from York and Warwick, the poet has not exhibited one single circumstance that might excite sympathy for *them*. They are cold, and cruel, and insolent, because a defenceless creature whom they had dreaded is in their power. Her parting malediction has, as it appears to us, a special reference to the calamities which await the authors of her death—

' May never glorious sun reflex his beams  
Upon the country where you make abode !  
But darkness and the gloomy shade of death  
Environ you.'

But in all the previous scenes, Shakespeare has drawn the character of the Maid with an undisguised sympathy for her courage, her patriotism, her high intellect, and her

II. iv., the Temple-Garden scene (as Hallam notes). Whether Shakespeare wrote more than II. iv., IV. ii.; perhaps IV. i.; iv. 12-46; possibly IV. v., I have not had time to work out; but a new ryming-man seems to me to begin in

IV. vi. vii.; and the first hand seems to write V. ii. iv., if not all V."—*F. J. Furnivall in Introduction to Gervinus's Shakespeare Commentaries* (ed. 1875).

enthusiasm. If she had been the defender of England and not of France, the poet could not have invested her with higher attributes. It is in her mouth that he puts his choicest thoughts, and his most musical verse. It is she who says—

‘ Glory is like a circle in the water,  
Which never ceaseth to enlarge itself,  
Till by broad spreading it disperse to nought.’

It is she who solicits the alliance of Burgundy in a strain of impassioned eloquence which belongs to one fighting in a high cause with unconquerable trust, and winning over enemies by the firm resolves of a vigorous understanding and an unshaken will. The lines beginning—

‘ Look on thy country—look on bleeding France,’

might have given the tone to everything that has been subsequently written in honour of the Maid. It was his accurate knowledge of the springs of character which, in so young a man, appears almost intuitive, that made Shakespeare adopt this delineation of Joan of Arc. He knew that, with all the influence of her supernatural pretension, this extraordinary woman could not have swayed the destinies of the kingdoms, and moulded princes and warriors to her will, unless she had been a person of very rare natural endowments. She was represented by the Chroniclers as a mere virago, a bold and shameless trull, a monster, a witch, because they adopted the vulgar view of her character—the view, in truth, of those to whom she was opposed. They were rough soldiers, with all the virtues and all the vices of their age; the creatures of brute force; the champions, indeed, of chivalry, but with the brand upon them of all the selfish passions with which the highest deeds of chivalry were too invariably associated.”

This is all that can be said of the character of Joan of Arc as it appears in the drama; and I have quoted Mr. Knight’s comment at length, because I must confess that I have not been able to raise my admiration of the dramatic treatment of her character so high. It has relative merit when compared to the treatment of the same subject by the chroniclers, but it falls, I think, very far short of what is justly due to beauty and purity and heroism of female character. I believe that the matured genius of the poet would have rendered such tribute in spite of national prejudice and universal injustice; and one cannot help lamenting that the subject fell into his hands only in the early and immature period of his imagination, to which the composition of the play, if it really was his, is ascribed.

The dispassionate and unprejudiced estimate of the character of the Maid of Orleans belongs, however, to a later age than that of Shakespeare; and the national animosity which hindered it has, in this case, died away, so that she is now a heroine to Englishmen, no less than to Frenchmen, and indeed a Christian heroine to all Christendom. The

poets of Britain and of Germany have drawn genuine inspiration from the memory of her life. But let me notice that, while there is a better spirit of justice in dealing with her history, the modern judgment differs from that which was contemporary with her in this respect, that now the supernatural element is excluded; and the question is whether she was a sincere and self-deluded enthusiast, or a wilful impostor. Formerly, the supernatural character of her mission was not doubted, and the question then was, whether the mission was from above or below. By those who were hostile, her influence was not regarded as a cheat and an imposture, but it was witchcraft—it was sorcery and Satanic inspiration—some strange dealing with the powers of darkness. The Duke of Gloucester issued a proclamation to reassure his soldiers against the *incantations* of the girl, and the Duke of Bedford spoke of her as a “disciple and limb of the fiend, that used false enchantments and sorceries.” Nobody seems to have had a doubt that she possessed supernatural powers; and the only question was, whether she brought with her “airs from heaven or blasts from hell.” The severe rationalism of modern times has, however, wholly changed this interpretation of her character and career, which may be admired and applauded, but must not be traced to any higher cause than such as serve to explain the ordinary affairs of daily life. . . . And yet I do not see that there is any great difference between saying that she was supernaturally commissioned to redeem her country from foreign dominion—a proposition which most minds would probably shrink from—and saying that in the providential government of the world it came into her heart to save France from English conquest—a proposition which, perhaps, none would have any difficulty in admitting.

This, at least, is clear: that what she said respecting her motives, and the influences upon her mind, she did sincerely and steadfastly believe. No authority could shake, no sophistry could beguile, her deep convictions of what she held to be the truth, though the whole world should discredit it. She said she was commissioned by Heaven to raise the siege of Orleans, and to crown Charles VII. at Rheims—two acts very remotely possible, nay, to human foresight, almost impracticable. And who was she that gave such wondrous promise? An humble shepherd girl, a mere child (for she was but nineteen years old), ignorant of the world—of everything but the mighty workings of her own soul—unfriended, and, indeed, with no earthly support of any kind, with no mortal countenance to cheer and encourage; and yet, what this poor girl said she was commissioned to do, that exactly she *did* do. Her mission was fulfilled; and while, perhaps, no one can confidently assert, or confidently deny, that her mission was, as she believed, divine, certainly in the world’s history there is not to be found such an achievement of unassisted human enthusiasm.

HENRY REED:—*Lectures on English History and Tragic Poetry as illustrated by Shakespeare* (1856), pp. 146—149.

## JOAN OF ARC AND HER TIMES.

THE situation, locally, of Joanna was full of profound suggestions to a heart that listened for the stealthy steps of change and fear that too surely were in motion. But if the place were grand, the time, the burden of the time, was far more so. The air overhead in its upper chambers was hurtling with the obscure sound; was dark with sullen fermenting of storms that had been gathering for a hundred and thirty years. The battle of Agincourt in Joanna's childhood had reopened the wounds of France. Crécy and Poitiers, those withering overthrows for the chivalry of France, had, before Agincourt occurred, been tranquillized by more than half a century; but this resurrection of their trumpet wails made the whole series of battles and endless skirmishes take their stations as parts in one drama. The graves that had closed sixty years ago seemed to fly open in sympathy with a sorrow that echoed their own. The monarchy of France laboured in extremity, rocked and reeled like a ship fighting with the darkness of monsoons. The madness of the poor king (Charles VI.) falling in at such a crisis, like the case of women labouring in child-birth during the storming of a city, trebled the awfulness of the time. Even the wild story of the incident which had immediately occasioned the explosion of this madness—the case of a man unknown, gloomy, and perhaps maniacal himself, coming out of a forest at noonday, laying his hand upon the bridle of the king's horse, checking him for a moment to say, "Ah, king, thou art betrayed," and then vanishing, no man knew whither, as he had appeared for no man knew what—fell in with the universal prostration of mind that laid France on her knees, as before the slow unweaving of some ancient prophetic doom. The famines, the extraordinary diseases, the insurrections of the peasantry up and down Europe—these were chords struck from the same mysterious harp; but these were transitory chords. There had been others of deeper and more ominous sound. The termination of the Crusades, the destruction of the Templars, the Papal interdicts, the tragedies caused or suffered by the House of Anjou and by the emperor—these were full of a more permanent significance. But, since then, the colossal figure of Feudalism was seen standing, as it were, on tiptoe, at Crécy, for flight from earth: that was a revolution unparalleled; yet *that* was a trifle, by comparison with the more fearful revolutions that were mining below the Church. By her own internal schisms, by the abominable spectacle of a double pope—so that no man, except through political bias, could even guess which was Heaven's vicegerent, and which was the creature of hell—the Church was rehearsing, as in still earlier forms she had already rehearsed, those vast rents in her foundations which no man should ever heal.

These were the loftiest peaks of the cloudland in the skies, that to the scientific gazer first caught the colours of the *new* morning in advance. But the whole vast range alike



of sweeping glooms overhead, dwelt upon all meditative minds, even upon those that could not distinguish the tendencies nor decipher the forms. It was, therefore, not her own age alone, as affected by its immediate calamities, that lay with such weight upon Joanna's mind; but her own age, as one section in a vast mysterious drama, unweaving through a century back, and drawing nearer continually to some dreadful crisis. Cataracts and rapids were heard roaring ahead; and signs were seen far back, by help of old men's memories, which answered secretly to signs now coming forward on the eye, even as locks answer to keys. It was not wonderful that in such a haunted solitude, with such a haunted heart, Joanna should see angelic visions, and hear angelic voices. These voices whispered to her for ever the duty, self-imposed, of delivering France. Five years she listened to these monitory voices with internal struggles. At length she could resist no longer. Doubt gave way; and she left her home for ever in order to present herself at the Dauphin's court.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY.—*Miscellanies, chiefly Narrative* (1858):

“*Joan of Arc*,” pp. 215—217.

### THE AGE OF KING HENRY VI.

THE First Part of *Henry VI.* forms the proper conclusion of *Henry the Fifth*, since the national war which is there exhibited now first attains to a real end. It concludes to the advantage of France, even because the intrinsic moral right has gone over to her side. For although the nobles and commonalty of France are not much better as yet, and are at best but more prudent and sharpened by experience, they have, nevertheless, abandoned their haughty self-confidence and groundless vanity, and a growing esteem for their adversary has laid the first step to victory. And, what is more important still, England, on the other hand, has lost her moral superiority. We are conscious at once of this loss in the introductory scenes, amid the selfish intrigues and quarrels of the nobles, in whose wake the people blindly follow, and that the people and army are no longer animated by the same spirit which gave the victory to Henry the Fifth, is proved, among other incidents of the campaign, by the disgraceful and cowardly flight of Fastolfe. Accordingly, the piece opens well with the funeral of Henry, as with the entombment of the victories and conquests of England. It was a grand, though great error, to suppose that at that time England could maintain a *lasting* rule over France. Whenever the political and national energy of a people are not completely broken, it is impossible for them to sink into a mere province of another kingdom. Nothing but the intrinsic weakness of France and the moral and heroic energy of Henry the Fifth could have lent to such a misconception the brief and transient sanction of success. When the French nation had once roused itself, a monarch as vigorous as the Sixth Henry was weak would have

found it impossible to retain the conquest, which in its encroachment was no less unjust and immoral than the attempt to enslave the man who is morally capable of freedom. In the final issue of the war, the judgment of God accordingly reveals itself; the same justice sinks the scale of England which before had raised it.

But the Divine interposition has its outward manifestation in the *Maid of Orleans*. Though Shakespeare, from the very first, makes her to be in league with the Evil One, he is nevertheless far from wishing to have it thought that her appearance on the scene is without the Divine permission, and does not exercise an important influence on the fortunes of the campaign. For in a certain sense the interference of supernatural agency in human affairs must be immediately Divine, inasmuch as the Evil One cannot operate on them without the permission of God. The more sentimental critics, indeed, are disposed to recognise in Shakespeare's *Joan of Arc* a pure and spotless maiden, at first acting under the immediate inspiration of Heaven, but subsequently losing her moral purity under the corrupting influence of success. The error of this view is, however, obvious and at once refuted by the boldness with which this modest damsel mixes with the French warriors, and receives their adoration. In the conception of the character of *Joan of Arc*, Shakespeare followed the national opinion of his countrymen, which was indeed the general belief of her contemporaries. No doubt it was untrue in all essential points; yet the truth could not and ought not to have been established in the present piece: for the *historical* drama ought to exhibit its subject-matter as it existed, and to paint with the utmost truth the feelings and characters of *its age*. It was, however, a feature in the character of the age in which the *Maid of Orleans* lived and flourished, that it was incapable of apprehending the great, the pure, and the noble in their intrinsic purity, and indeed that the great and noble could not preserve themselves entirely and wholly pure. For the result of long and searching investigations is unable to place Joan in such a light, and even Schiller's ideal, but most unhistorical representation of her, is not sufficient to wash away all the stains which adhere to her reputation. That in her own lonely musings, and before her appearance on the field of history, she was animated by great and beautiful thoughts, Shakespeare himself leaves us to suppose, by the rumour which he allows to precede her. But in order to realize these thoughts *in such a time*—at the very moment in which she entered actively into the complicated machinery of their realization, she gave up herself to the Evil One; but whether voluntarily or involuntarily—this, as indifferent for the poetical end he had in view, the poet has justly left undecided. It was thus that she did fall, in truth; and thus does she appear also to fall in the present drama, as the victim of the fundamental idea which animates the whole trilogy.

DR. HERMANN ULRICI.—*Shakespeare's Dramatic Art*. Translated by A. J. W. M. (ed. 1876), pp. 388—390.





H. Adams del.

Joh. Bauer sc.

*König Heinrich VI. Dritter Theil - King Henry VI., Part III.*

THIRD PART OF  
KING HENRY VI.

## ACT IV.

SCENE III. EDWARD'S *Camp near Warwick.*

*Enter WARWICK, CLARENCE, OXFORD, SOMERSET, and French soldiers, silent all.*

*War.* This is his tent ; and see where stand his guard.

Courage, my masters ! honour now or never !  
But follow me, and Edward shall be ours.

*First Watch.* Who goes there ?

*Second Watch.* Stay, or thou diest !

(WARWICK and the rest cry all, 'Warwick ! Warwick !' and set upon the Guard, who fly, crying, 'Arm ! Arm !'  
WARWICK and the rest following them.)

*The drum playing and trumpet sounding, re-enter WARWICK, SOMERSET, and the rest, bringing the KING out in his gown, sitting in a chair. RICHARD and HASTINGS fly over the stage.*

*Som.* What are they that fly there ?

*War.* Richard and Hastings : let them go ; here is

The duke.

*K. Edw.* The duke ! Why, Warwick, when we parted,

Thou call'dst me king.

*War.* Ay, but the case is alter'd :  
When you disgraced me in my embassy,

Then I degraded you from being king,  
And come now to create you Duke of York.  
Alas ! how should you govern any kingdom,  
That know not how to use ambassadors,  
Nor how to be contented with one wife,  
Nor how to use your brothers brotherly,  
Nor how to study for the people's welfare,  
Nor how to shroud yourself from enemies ?

*K. Edw.* Yea, brother of Clarence, art thou here too ?

Nay, then I see that Edward needs must down.

Yet, Warwick, in despite of all mischance,  
Of thee thyself and all thy complices,  
Edward will always bear himself as king :  
Though fortune's malice overthrow my state,  
My mind exceeds the compass of her wheel.

*War.* Then, for his mind, be Edward England's king : [Takes off his crown.]

But Henry now shall wear the English crown,  
And be true king indeed, thou but the shadow.  
My Lord of Somerset, at my request,  
See that forthwith Duke Edward be convey'd  
Unto my brother, Archbishop of York.  
When I have fought with Pembroke and his fellows

I'll follow you, and tell what answer  
Lewis and the Lady Bona send to him.

Now, for a while farewell, good Duke of York.

[They lead him out forcibly.]

*K. Edw.* What fates impose, that men must needs abide ;

It boots not to resist both wind and tide.

[Exit, guarded.]

## WHO WROTE HENRY VI. ?

THERE always has been—there always will be—the greatest interest in determining accurately what are Shakespeare's writings, and what are not. Under cover of that mighty name much rubbish has for generations been palmed off on uncritical readers as valuable ; and some intrinsically beautiful writing has been assigned to him, to the injury of the reputation of its real author. The latter wrong has been remedied in two exceedingly ingenious and altogether able papers by Messrs. Hickson and Spedding, and Fletcher's claim to his share of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Henry VIII.* has been completely

vindicated and accurately assigned. The former wrong has also been in part set right by the present writer, and the portions due to Shakespeare's creation in *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Timon of Athens*, and *Pericles*, ascertained with exactness. Fortunately, in these instances, the metal can be separated from the dross, and its beauty enjoyed without diminution from alloy. Of the problems of a similar nature that remain unsolved, there is none equal in interest and importance to that on which the present paper is written. . . . Up to the present time three distinct theories have been propounded. Firstly, Malone's, to the effect that the imperfect copies of the second and third of the three plays, which we call collectively *Henry VI.*, published under the names of *The Contention of the Houses of York and Lancaster*, and *The True Tragedy of the Duke of York*, were written by Marlow, Greene, and Peele, and that Shakespeare, on this foundation, built the present plays. Secondly, Knight's, that Shakespeare wrote both the imperfect and the completed plays. Thirdly, Mr. Grant White's, that Shakespeare, Greene, Marlow, and perhaps Peele, wrote the imperfect plays in conjunction; and that Shakespeare, in the perfect plays, reclaimed and added to his own work, rejecting that of his coadjutors. I shall not here attempt any refutation of these remarkable and imaginative theories, as I hope to give convincing evidence of the truth of my own. I shall merely premise that there is no evidence whatever for Shakespeare's having any share in either the early or late editions, except the solitary fact that the editors of the First Folio included *Henry VI.* in their collection; and the value of their evidence is shown by their rejecting *Pericles* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, which unquestionably were in the greater part written by Shakespeare. . . . The First Part of *Henry VI.*, which we know only from the Folio editions, has been rejected by nearly every editor of authority.

[Mr. Fleay proceeds first to examine the external evidences. He finds that *The True Tragedy* was in the possession of Lord Pembroke's players, in 1595, who had possession of Marlow's *Edward II.* in 1593. But Shakespeare was never in connection with any company except the Chamberlain's (afterwards the King's, 1603), and, perhaps, Lord Strange's. It was not until after Shakespeare's death that his company appear to have got possession of *The Whole Contention*, i.e. the two old plays. Mr. Fleay notes that the publishers of *The Whole Contention* were merely pirates and falsifiers, who had forged Shakespeare's name on the title-pages of *The Yorkshire Tragedy* and *Sir John Oldcastle*; and who, save surreptitious editions of *Pericles* and *Henry V.*, never published an edition of a play of Shakespeare. So far the evidence points to Marlow as an author of the *Whole Contention*. An allusion in Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit* seems to point to Peele as a second author. Mr. Fleay then goes on to examine the æsthetic evidence.]

I mean by this (æsthetic evidence) the result of careful reading by a cultivated mind; the general flavour left on the palate after a copious, but not hasty libation. Now, I suppose no one will deny that the parts of 2 *Henry VI.* which clearly detach themselves

from the rest are Act III. Scenes 3, 4. The first of them with its death-speech of Beaufort :

“ Bring me unto my trial when you will.  
 Died he not in his bed? Where should he die?  
 Can I make men live whether they will or no?  
 O torture me no more : I will confess.  
 Alive again? Then show me where he is,  
 I'll give a thousand pounds to look upon him.  
 He hath no eyes, the dust hath blinded them.  
 Comb down his hair ; look, look, it stands upright,  
 Like lime-twigs set to catch my winged soul.  
 Give me some drink, and bid th' apothecary  
 Bring the strong poison that I bought of him.”

with the king's terrible afterword :

“ He dies and makes no sigh.”

should be compared with Faustus's death :

“ *O lente, lente currite noctis equi!*  
 The stars move still, time runs, the clocks will strike,  
 The devil will come, and Faustus must be damned.  
 Oh I'll leap up to heaven ! Who pulls me down?  
 See where Christ's blood streams in the firmament.  
 One drop of blood will save me. Oh my Christ !  
 Rend not my heart for naming of my Christ !  
 Yet will I call on him. O spare me, Lucifer !  
 Where is it now? 'Tis gone,  
 And see a threatening arm, an angry brow !  
 Mountains and hills—come, come and fall on me !  
 And hide me from the heavy wrath of heaven !”

with the chorus comment :

“ Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight  
 And burned is Apollo's laurel bough.”

Not even in Shakespeare is there a death-scene of despair like either of these two. But the whole scenes should be read to judge them fairly.

And in the next scene none but the same hand could have written :

“ The gaudy, blabbing and remorseful day,  
 Is crept into the bosom of the sea ;  
 And now loud howling wolves arouse the jades,  
 That drag the tragic melancholy night.”

In 3 *Henry VI.* the second and fifth acts are conspicuously different from the other three. [These acts were written, in Mr. Fleay's opinion, by Marlow.] . . . On the

other hand, Marlow could not have written the Cade part of 2 *Henry VI.*, nor the quick thrust and parry of the wooing scene between Edward and the Widow. He had no humour whatever in his composition, nor had Greene, but Peele had, and his works abound with similar passages. Compare, for instance, *Edward I.*, Scene 6, with the latter of these scenes, and Scene 8 with the Cade part of 2 *Henry VI.* . . .

In 3 *Henry VI.*, although the same hand is visible in Acts i., iii., iv., as in the greater part of 2 *Henry VI.*, it is evidently more cramped and laboured; the writer is out of his element. He does not care for battles and combats, and in Acts iii. iv. gets away from them whenever he can. He is clearly writing under orders, and does it not badly, but not at his best. Marlow is therefore probably the principal arranger, or plotter, and Peele his subordinate.

In 1 *Henry VI.* Marlow's hand is visible at the outset:—

“ Hung be the heavens with black, yield day to night,  
Comets importing change of times and states  
Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky,  
And with them scourge the bad revolting stars,  
That have consented unto Henry's death ! ”

But it is the Marlow of *Tamberlane*, not of *Faustus* and *Edward II.* The same hand runs through i. 1; i. 3; iii. 1; iv. 1; v. 1. An inferior hand, exactly in Greene's style, has had the French plot entrusted to him. . . . There are also three scenes—iv. 4; v. 1; v. 5—which are quite different in tone from the rest of the play, and are by some one who is neither Greene, Peele, nor Marlow; and one scene, ii. 4, which in the opinion of Sidney Walker, and, I think, of every one who reads it attentively, is certainly by Shakespeare—date between *Richard II.* and *John.*

*Power of Delineating Character.*—Here, again, there is a manifest difference between the parts I have assigned to Peele in *The Whole Contention* and those I have given to Marlow. Of all the personages handled by the latter, *Richard*, and *Richard* only, stands out fairly from the background. But *Richard* was done to his hand by the chroniclers. In all his grand passages, such as the deaths of Winchester and Suffolk, it is the circumstance and not the man that impresses. We think of the despairing agony of the cardinal and the magician, not of Beaufort or Faustus, as people whom we know. He is the tragedian of situations, not of men. Hence his great difference from Shakespeare; hence also his inferiority. Peele, on the other hand, is in this respect the greater master of the two. Who recognises Northumberland, Exeter, and the rest of the nobles of Henry's court as individuals? But Henry, Margaret, Iden, Cade, and the rest in Peele's part of the play have a distinct personality; they are creations of a lower order than Shakespeare's, but still creations.

[Mr. Fleay's conclusion is that 1 *Henry VI.* is the production of Marlow and Greene,



with a few additions ; 2 *Henry VI.* and 3 *Henry VI.* of Marlow and Peele ; that Marlow was the original plotter or constructor of all three plays. The metrical evidence is investigated, and found to support this theory. Shakespeare, Mr. Fleay maintains, had no hand in any part of *Henry VI.*, except in the scene in the Temple Garden ; no hand, that is, as a writer. He may have *corrected Henry VI.* ; certainly not have originally written any one scene of 2 *Henry VI.* or 3 *Henry VI.* *The Whole Contention* he believes to be an imperfect, surreptitious copy of what we know by the name of 2 and 3 *Henry VI.* Mr. Fleay then proceeds to put forth the startling hypothesis that *Richard III.* is substantially a play of Peele's, left unfinished at his death, when Shakespeare added Act V. Scenes 2, 3, 4, and the alterations found in the folio.]

REV. F. G. FLEAY.—*Who Wrote Henry VI.?* *Macmillan's Magazine*, November, 1875.

### THE HISTORY OF THE CROWN IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS.

NOTHING shows the unity of this series of Chronicle plays better than tracing through them one single thread of history, such as the position of the nobles. We have Chronicle plays by different authors, one (*Edward III.*) to which Shakespeare himself probably contributed an Act. But neither this, nor Heywood's *Edward IV.* or *Elizabeth*, nor any other—except, perhaps, Marlow's *Edward II.*, where we may suspect the counsel and assistance of Shakespeare—could be inserted in the Shakespearian series ; that series stands alone, not so much in the merit of its individual pieces, as in absolute philosophical unity. Other plays deal with other classes of facts—the love affairs and victories of kings, and the failures of traitors. These all deal with their various subject-matter in such a way that we may extract out of them a Shakespearian philosophy of history.

After the nobles, let us trace the history of the Crown. King John is owned, even by his mother, to have possession, but no right ; and Falconbridge, after Arthur's death, whose title he always opposed, says :

“ The life, the right, the truth of all this realm,  
Is fled to heaven ; and England now is left  
To tug and scramble, and to part by the teeth  
The unowed title.”

The rebellion of the nobles, justified morally, is only condemned politically as unpatriotic ; a treason, not against the King, but against the country ; which they not only ravaged by war, but delivered over to the foreigner.

None of the Kings shown by Shakespeare makes any protestation of

independence comparable in vigour to John's. He rejects the Pope's claim to interrogate him as "slight, unworthy, and ridiculous." Yet he immediately pleads before the Legate, resigns his crown, and receives it again as the Pope's vassal.

And none of the Kings insists so strongly as Richard II. on his divine right, and on the prerogatives of the Crown. He trusts more to the divinity that hedges a king than to armies or policy, and protests that no hand but God's can deprive him of his rights. His very friends mock his "senseless conjuration." Yet he is the only King in these plays who makes a formal abdication, and unseats himself from the throne, all the time protesting that the Pilates which make him do so commit an unpardonable sin, and prophesying to Northumberland the penalty which must overtake him. But only a few think with him. The Bishop of Carlisle declares that no subject can give sentence on his sovereign; and to satisfy these scruples, the King is made to pronounce his own deposition.

In the eyes of the most reasonable personages of the play, the Crown is as subject to the law as any other dignity. The hereditary right of the King is only one of many such rights. York urges, that if the king prevents Hereford's succession, he invalidates his own (II. i. 191). And Bolingbroke (II. iii.):

" If that my cousin King be King of England,  
It must be granted I am Duke of Lancaster."

The poet seems to regard the deposition of a bad king, not as a right for courts to enforce, but a fatal and natural consequence of his follies. The process develops itself almost to completion in *King John*, and to its final conclusion in *Richard II.*, *Henry VI.*, and *Richard III.* The nobles and people are alienated by misgovernment and by crime. And the crowning delinquency is often the murder of the heir to the Crown. Shakespeare unhistorically represents this to be the cause of John's unpopularity; and rightly, that of Richard III. He also makes Henry VI.'s disinheriting his own son to be the central knot of his unhappy career. The murder of Richard II. is shown as a stain on the conscience, not of Henry VI. only, but of Henry V. also. It is a pity we have not Shakespeare's own direct judgment upon the affair of Mary Queen of Scots.

After the murder or disinheriting of the right heir, the prince's abuses of his ordinary power are causes of his fall. If he tampers with the tenure of land (as I suppose is the meaning of "farming his realm," and making himself "landlord, not King of England," and "binding the whole land with rotten parchment bonds"); if he is unjust to the nobles, gives ear to flatterers, cherishes informers, pills the Commons with taxes, fines the nobles for old quarrels, devises new exactions—such as blanks and benevolences; fails to account for the money, but becomes bankrupt; unable to borrow, and obliged to rob; suffers his garden to be overrun with caterpillars; permits great and growing men to do

wrong without correction, and wastes his idle hours instead of attending to his work—then he must fall. The nation commits all these works to his hands without constitutional safeguards for his proper performance of them, except this—that if he notably fails, he must have notice to quit; for the Crown is responsible to the nation.

As in *Richard II.* a good title is marred by folly, so in *Henry IV.* a bad title is patched up with policy. The “vile politician, Bolingbroke,” is incomparably a better ruler than Richard was, or Hotspur would have been, who would have divided England into three, and taken a step backwards towards the Heptarchy. Bolingbroke’s instructions to his son how to secure the Crown savour of the personal politics of the day, which seems not to have discovered the movements of political forces, but attributed everything to the personal deportment of the prince. In these instructions the King looks on the Crown, not as a birthright, but as the prize of the ablest and most popular competitor. His purpose of a crusade, announced at the end of *Richard II.*, “to wash the blood from off his guilty head,” is continued in 1 *Henry IV.*, with a utilitarian purpose of knitting together the unravell’d threads of faction, and making them “in mutual ranks march all one way.”

In 2 *Henry IV.* the King’s conscience is still more uneasy; but his repentance takes the very vulgar form of securing to himself and his family still more certainly the gain of his crime. He comforts his son by telling him he need not keep the Crown by such means as he, the father, used to gain and to keep it. He had been obliged gradually to weed away those who had helped him to get it. The son will come peaceably to the inheritance, and will not be forced to cut off his friends; but only to keep them engaged in foreign quarrels till the memory of the original fault of the title is worn away.

But though the King thus confesses to himself and his son, he will not hear the reproach from anyone else. He knows he is a sham, yet he poses himself as God’s substitute, and distributes death to the man who publicly asks the question which the King nightly puts privately to himself.

The drama of *Henry V.* shows how all questions of right are overwhelmed by a great and striking success. The only unquestioned king is the one man who shows himself the natural head and leader of his people. Even plots that really turned on the question of title (like that of Scrope and the Earl of Cambridge) the dramatist puts aside as purposeless treasons, a sottish yielding to a diabolical suggestion. It is as if the nobles—whose function it is to watch over the king’s administration, and in the last resort to remove the incapable sovereign—have no right whatever to question the title of a man whom the country approves. The plea of title is merely a convenient method of getting rid of a bad sovereign, and of no moment at all in the case of a good one.

In *Henry V.* the noble watch round the throne becomes useless through the king’s superiority. In *Henry VI.* it breaks up through the personal ambition of the nobles.

Gloucester is the best of them. But his retainers are as troublesome to peaceable citizens as those of Beaufort. The man who is foremost at Court for the moment assumes all the authority of the king; "our authority is his consent," says Suffolk (2 *Henry VI.*, III. i. 316). "Now we three have spoke it, it skills not greatly who impugns his doom" (*Ib.* 280). The imbecility of the king affords no check to his barons, and the country is ravaged by their lawlessness. . . . In this break-up of the old constitutional balance between the two powers, the Crown and the Baronage, with the Church as arbitrator—for the Church in the person of Beaufort becomes altogether immersed in the strife for its own interests—a new force naturally crops up—the force of the people and the citizens. The country people under Cade are entirely deficient in all political qualities. But the citizens of London and Bury show themselves to be highly intelligent, and their intervention is decisive.

The reign of Edward IV. is too slightly sketched to show very clearly the change which really took place in the royal position. The Crown then became absolute, with the constitutional check, no longer of the Barons, but of the imperfectly organized Commons. But enough is shown to prove that Shakespeare knew of the change. The Duke of York's first test of his chances is through Cade's rising :—

" By this I shall perceive the Commons' mind,  
How they affect the House and claim of York."

Suffolk, on the contrary, like the old nobles, loses no chance of showing his contempt for the Commons, even when he is about to be sacrificed to their vengeance. Henry knows that "the city favours" the family of York (3 *Henry VI.* i. 67). When Edward returns after his deposition he is said to have come with "hasty Germans and blunt Hollanders," but the populace also were with him, and "many giddy people flock to him;" but Warwick trusts to his country tenantry :—

" In Warwickshire I have true-hearted friends,  
Not mutinous in peace, yet bold in war."

True to his position, the last of the great barons confided in the old feudal relations of lord and vassal, and was blind to the rise of a new popular force in the great cities.

Richard III. states clearly a chief feature of the new *régime* of Edward IV. :—

" The world is grown so bad,  
That wrens may prey where eagles dare not perch.  
Since every jack became a gentleman,  
There's many a noble person made a jack."

Richard himself so far recognises the new base of his power, that he founds his first claim to the crown on the acclamations of the citizens. The poet is careful, in a previous scene, to show how wisely the citizens can speak of political affairs; and he is careful also to show the means which Richard took to bolster up their pretended vote in his avour; so that his election may not be an argument against this new basis of power. After his election, the poet shows how the king got rid of all his noble surrounding, and was determined to be bound by no council. . . . When the nobles lost their heads, plebeian administrators, "the cat, the rat, and Lovel the dog," came to the top: nay, even boys appeared the most convenient tools of the royal policy. This was in reality the scheme of the Tudor government. The accession of Henry VII. changed nothing except the character of the monarch, whose ministers drained the purses instead of the veins of his subjects, and whose successor had to sacrifice the gold-suckers of his father to the popular clamours, as Henry VII. had sacrificed the blood-suckers of Richard.

In *Henry VIII.* Shakespeare adds little to the conception of the royal autocracy, except the substitution of the law courts for the "unrespectful boys" of Richard, and the throwing on ministerial shoulders the responsibility of the injustices for which the autocrat ought evidently to be responsible. Thus Wolsey is made answerable for the grievous taxation, which the king and queen repudiate.

RICHARD SIMPSON.—*The Politics of Shakspeare's Historical Plays; in Transactions of the New Shakspeare Society*, 1874. Part II. pp. 426—438.

## ROMEO AND JULIET.

ACT III.

SCENE V. CAPULET'S Orchard.

*Enter ROMEO and JULIET above, at the window.*

*Jul.* Wilt thou be gone? it is not yet near day :  
It was the nightingale, and not the lark,  
That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear ;  
Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate-tree ;  
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

*Rom.* It was the lark, the herald of the morn.  
No nightingale : look, love, what envious streaks  
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east :  
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day  
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.  
I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

*Jul.* Yon light is not daylight, I know it, I :  
It is some meteor that the sun exhales,  
To be to thee this night a torch-bearer,  
And light thee on thy way to Mantua :  
Therefore stay yet ; thou need'st not to begone.

*Rom.* Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death ;  
I am content, so thou wilt have it so.  
I'll say yon grey is not the morning's eye,  
'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow ;  
Nor that is not the lark, whose notes do beat  
The vaulty heaven so high above our heads :  
I have more care to stay than will to go :  
Come, death, and welcome ; Juliet wills it so.  
How is't, my soul? let's talk ; it is not day.

*Jul.* It is, it is : hie hence, be gone, away !  
It is the lark that sings so out of tune,  
Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps.  
Some say the lark makes sweet division ;  
This doth not so, for she divideth us :  
Some say the lark and loathed toad change eyes ;  
Oh, now I would they had changed voices too !  
Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,  
Hunting thee hence with hunt's-up to the day.

Oh, now be gone ; more light and light it grows.  
*Rom.* More light and light ; more dark and  
dark our woes !

### PECULIAR ATMOSPHERE OF "ROMEO AND JULIET."

WHO cannot recall lovely summer nights when the forces of nature seem ripe for development and yet sunk in drowsy languor,—intense heat mingled with exuberant vigour, fervid force, and silent freshness?

The nightingale's song comes from the depth of the grove. The flower-cups are half-closed. A pale lustre illumines the foliage of the forests, and the brow of the hills. This profound repose conceals, we feel, a procreant force ; the melancholy bashfulness of nature is the veil which hides a burning emotion. Beneath the pallor and coolness of night and its orb, we are aware of restrained impetuosity, and of flowers brooding in the silence and eager to burst into blossom.

Such is the peculiar atmosphere in which Shakespeare has enveloped one of his most marvellous creations—*Romeo and Juliet*.

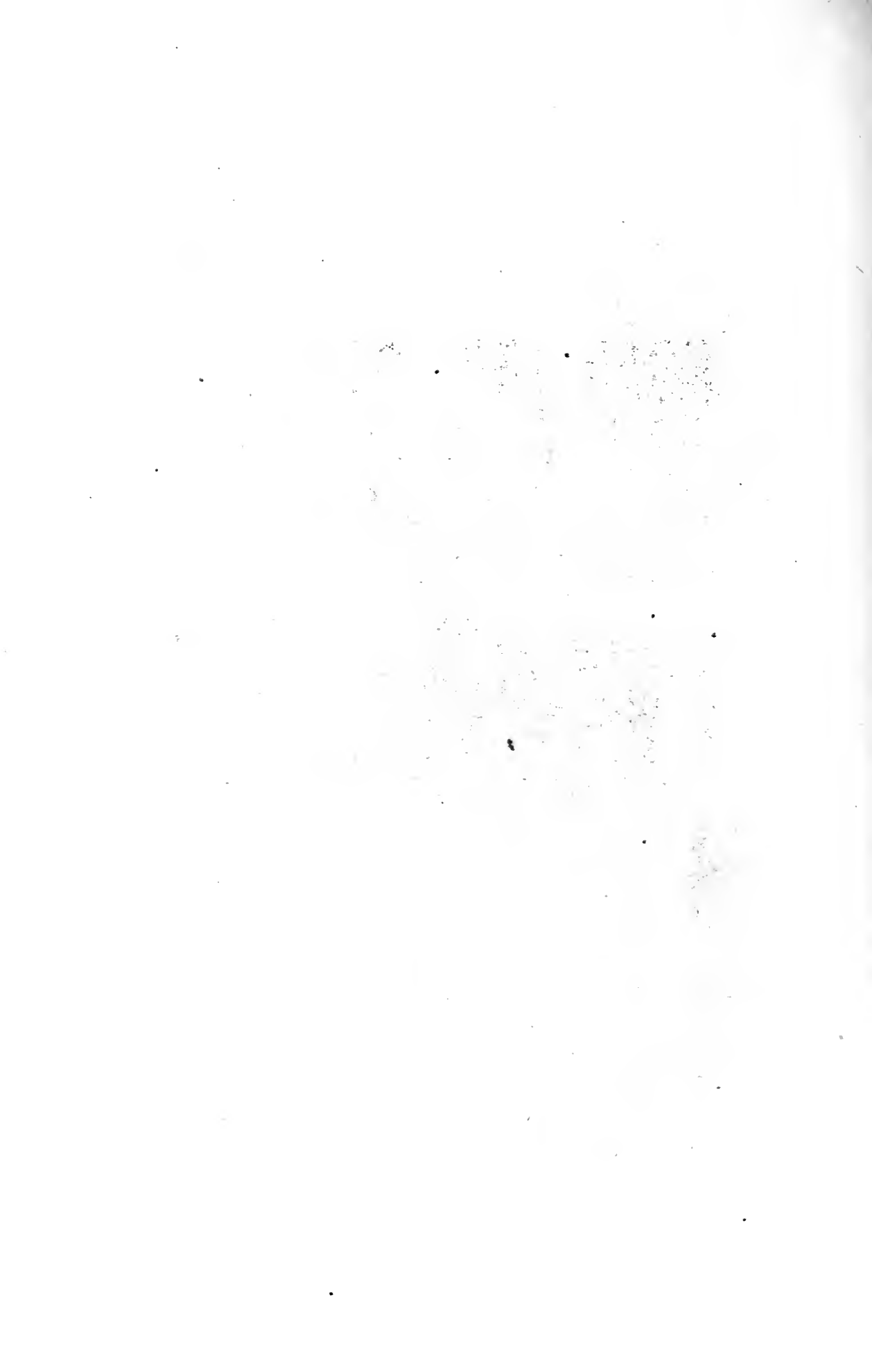
Here not alone the substance of the drama, but the very form of the language comes from the South. Italy was the inventor of the tale ; it breathes the very spirit of her national records, her old family feuds, her annals filled with amorous and bloody intrigues. No one can fail to recognize Italy in its lyric movement, in the blindness of its passion, in its



H. Lehmann del.

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Romeo und Juliet — Romeo und Juliet?





blossoming and abundant vitality, in its brilliant images, in its bold and free design. Romeo's words flow like one of Petrarch's sonnets ; with a like delicate choice, a like antithesis, a like grace, and a like delight in clothing his passion in rhythmical allegory. Juliet also is wholly Italian ; endowed with small foresight, but possessing a perfect ingenuousness in her *abandon*, she is at once passionate and pure.

With Friar Laurence we foresee that the lovers will be conquered by fate ; Shakespeare will not close the tomb upon them until he has intoxicated them with all the happiness which human existence can sustain. The balcony scene is the last gleam of this fleeting bliss. Heavenly accents float upon the air, the fragrance of pomegranate blossoms is wafted aloft to Juliet's chamber, the sighing plaint of the nightingale pierces the leafy shadows of the grove ; nature, dumb and impassioned, owns her perfume and her sounds only to add her utterance to that hymn, sublime and melancholy, which tells of the frailty of human happiness.

PHILARÈTE CHASLES.—*Études sur W. Shakspeare*, pp. 141—42 and p. 159.

#### MORAL SPIRIT OF THE PLAY.

WE have here one of those inexhaustible subjects which, losing themselves in the night of time, wandering from nation to nation, preserve their potency in the most various tongues, and forms of art ; enduring, sacred symbols of the simplest and therefore the mightiest combinations of human will, emotion and endeavour. But in passing from the joyous domain of the South, and the life of pleasure proper to the Romance nations, into the rude, earnest and grander Teutonic world, this stream of intoxicating poetry broadens into a mighty and roaring torrent, with dangerous whirlpools and mysterious depths, but also with a richer body of the quickening and refreshing element. The Romanticists, and a majority of the non-critical public praise *Romeo and Juliet* especially for the peculiar southern air which breathes through the piece ; it is the glow of feeling and the lovely splendour of the poetic diction that with them chiefly determine the worth of the poem.

. . . . But [this view] is far from doing justice to the dignity of Shakespeare's tragedy ; it does not penetrate through the glittering costume to the heart of the work of art. Shakespeare does not here content himself with painting Love in its raptures, and in its wildest griefs ; he draws aside the veil from its mysterious connection with the presiding moral forces of life ; he lays bare the most hidden fibres by which it pierces to the very marrow of character ; he is not merely the painter of the great passion—he is at the same time and equally its physiologist. Let us try to justify this judgment.

We are struck at once with the care with which Shakespeare in this piece treats almost

all the subordinate characters, as well as with the unusually large space given to the humorous scenes, occurring close by the pathetic. He evidently takes pains to keep always present before us the place where the fate of the lovers is unfolded and consummated, we are constantly urged in the moon-illuminated magic-night of feeling not to forget the clear light of day and of fact. Romeo and Juliet are presented to us not as the abstract lovers of the troubadours' songs, or of the love-tales, but as distinct persons involved in concrete relations of all kinds. We shall do well, therefore, to consider these relations accurately before we entrust our judgment to the stormy sea of poetic raptures and tragic passions. Thus much is clear at a first glance, that these relations are far from corresponding to the conditions of a well-ordered state of society. We have before us a piece of true mediæval, Italian life, as Shakespeare and the cultured of his time knew it through the Italian novelists; as Goethe has made it known to the general reading public of Germany through his translation of Benvenuto Cellini. Much life and little order, high intellectual attainment side by side with moral savagery, and uncontrolled passion, all the blossoms of a refined culture side by side with a high degree of moral rudeness. Bloody street-fights alternate in the lives of the cavaliers with brilliant festivals; in the boudoirs of ladies coarse jests of the nurse play their part side by side with Petrarch's sonnets; the phial of poison has its place among the mysteries of the toilet, and in the brilliant array of the highest taste and art, passion almost loses the consciousness of its unwarrantable antagonism to the natural and necessary order of life.

[Contrasting Juliet's heroic strength with Romeo's weakness, Herr Kreyssidg goes on :—]

Whence this victorious, heroic strength in the weak and tender woman, while the man, like a reed in the storm, is borne hither and thither in the delirium of fear and hope? Whence these Goethe-like figures of the feminine man and the woman as bold and determined as she is sensitive, in the world of Shakespeare?

The answer is simple. In this tragedy Shakespeare makes his solitary excursion into the province wherein the poet of Werther and Charlotte, of Tasso and Leonora, of Edward and Ottilia reigns as born lord and master—I mean the narrow, but all the more blooming and fragrant domain of purely human and individual feelings, and especially the mysteries of the most powerful of all purely subjective passions,—that which is essentially passion, Love. In this domain woman finds the natural calling of her life, while the healthily developed man enters it, so to speak, only as a guest, to wipe away the sweat of the place of strife, and in that true and precious home of his heart to renew his strength for the stern but salutary conflicts of manhood. Woe to him if the place of rest unfits him for the combat! The woman who gives up her whole being to love rises above the weakness of her sex to the dignity and heroic strength of a purely human ideality; the man, to whom love becomes the one aim of life, swallowing up all other aims, abandons himself with riven sails and rudderless to the storm. Fallen away from the fundamental

law of his being, he presents the unbecoming appearance of all that is discordant and contradictory, and the more richly he is endowed, the greater his original strength, only the more surely does he succumb not to fate, but to the Nemesis of the natural law which he has violated. Shakespeare soaring on his eagle wing above all heights and depths of man's being and emotion, has by no means overlooked these romantic abysses of the great passion. He has fathomed them, he has revealed their loveliest and their most fearful mysteries, as few after him have done. But it is a weighty testimony to the massive healthiness of his character that among the heroes of his serious plays, Romeo alone falls a victim to love, while all the other cavaliers of love grace the variegated festal-array of his Comedies.

The vision, which the closing scene opens to us, beyond the horrors of death, through the gloomy peace of the morning as it breaks over the graves of the lovers, of the wholesome yet dearly purchased fruit of so many lives (I mean the reconciliation of the two contending houses)—that vision dissipates with a solemn and masculine harmony all the discord of passionate lament. With a clear view of the serious, saving, and harmonizing event, not with inconsolable grief for a happiness irrecoverably lost, closes this celebrated love-tragedy of the most glowing and most tender, but also the soundest and most manly of poets.

F. KREYSSIG.—*Vorlesungen über Shakespeare*. Zweiter Band. pp. 23—41 (ed. 1874).

### SHAKESPEARE'S TESTIMONY TO THE POSITION AND CHARACTER OF WOMEN.

LET US try, then, whether we cannot get at some clear and harmonious idea (it must be harmonious if it is true) of what womanly mind and virtue are in power and office, with respect to man's; and how their relations, rightly accepted, aid and increase the vigour and honour and authority of both.

Let us see whether the greatest, the wisest, the purest-hearted of all ages are agreed in any wise on this point; let us hear the testimony they have left respecting what they held to be the true dignity of woman, and her mode of help to man.

And first let us take Shakespeare.

Note broadly at the outset, Shakespeare has no heroes;—he has only heroines. There is not one entirely heroic figure in all his plays, except the slight sketch of Henry the Fifth, exaggerated for the purposes of the stage; and the still slighter Valentine in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. In his laboured and perfect plays you have no hero. Othello would have been one, if his simplicity had not been so great as to leave him the prey of

every base practice round him; but he is the only example even approximating to the heroic type. Coriolanus, Cæsar, Antony stand in flawed strength and fall by their vanities;—Hamlet is indolent and drowsily speculative; Romeo an impatient boy; the Merchant of Venice languidly submissive to adverse fortune; Kent, in *King Lear*, is entirely noble at heart, but too rough and unpolished to be of true use at the critical time, and he sinks into the office of a servant only. Orlando, no less noble, is yet the despairing toy of chance, followed, comforted, saved, by Rosalind. Whereas there is hardly a play that has not a perfect woman in it, steadfast in grave hope and errorless purpose: Cordelia, Desdemona, Isabella, Hermione, Imogen, Queen Katharine, Perdita, Sylvia, Viola, Rosalind, Helena, and last and perhaps loveliest, Virgilia, are all faultless; conceived in the highest heroic type of humanity.

Then observe, secondly—

The catastrophe of every play is caused always by the folly or fault of a man; the redemption, if there be any, by the wisdom and virtue of a woman, and failing that, there is none. The catastrophe of *King Lear* is owing to his own want of judgment, his impatient vanity, his misunderstanding of his children; the virtue of his one true daughter would have saved him from all the injuries of the others, unless he had cast her away from him; as it is, she all but saves him.

Of *Othello* I need not trace the tale; nor the one weakness of his so mighty love; nor the inferiority of his perceptive intellect to that even of the second woman character in the play, the Emilia who dies in wild testimony against his error: "Oh, murderous coxcomb! What should such a fool do with so good a wife?" In *Romeo and Juliet*, the wise and entirely brave stratagem of the wife is brought to ruinous issue by the reckless impatience of her husband. In *Winter's Tale* and in *Cymbeline*, the happiness and existence of two princely households, lost through long years, and imperilled to the death by the folly and obstinacy of the husbands, are redeemed at last by the queenly patience and wisdom of the wives. In *Measure for Measure*, the injustice of the judges, and the corrupt cowardice of the brother, are opposed to the victorious truth and adamant purity of a woman. In *Coriolanus*, the mother's counsel, acted upon in time, would have saved her son from all evil; his momentary forgetfulness of it is his ruin; her prayer, at last granted, saves him—not indeed from death, but from the curse of living as the destroyer of his country.

And what shall I say of Julia, constant against the fickleness of a lover who is a mere wicked child?—of Helena, against the petulance and insult of a careless youth?—of the patience of Hero, the passion of Beatrice, and the calmly devoted wisdom of the "unlessoned girl," who appears among the helplessness, the blindness, and the vindictive passions of men, as a gentle angel, to save merely by her presence, and defeat the worst intensities of crime by her smile?

Observe, farther, among all the principal figures in Shakespeare's plays there is only one weak woman—Ophelia ; and it is because she fails Hamlet at the critical moment, and is not, and cannot in her nature be, a guide to him when he needs her most, that all the bitter catastrophe follows. Finally, though there are three wicked women among the principal figures—Lady Macbeth, Regan, and Goneril—they are felt at once to be frightful exceptions to the ordinary laws of life ; fatal in their influence also in proportion to the power for good which they have abandoned.

Such in broad light is Shakespeare's testimony to the position and character of women in human life. He represents them as infallibly faithful and wise counsellors—incorruptibly just and pure examples—strong always to sanctify, even when they cannot save.

JOHN RUSKIN.—*Sesame and Lilies*, pp. 125—131 (ed. 1865).

#### RHYME AND BLANK VERSE IN "ROMEO AND JULIET."

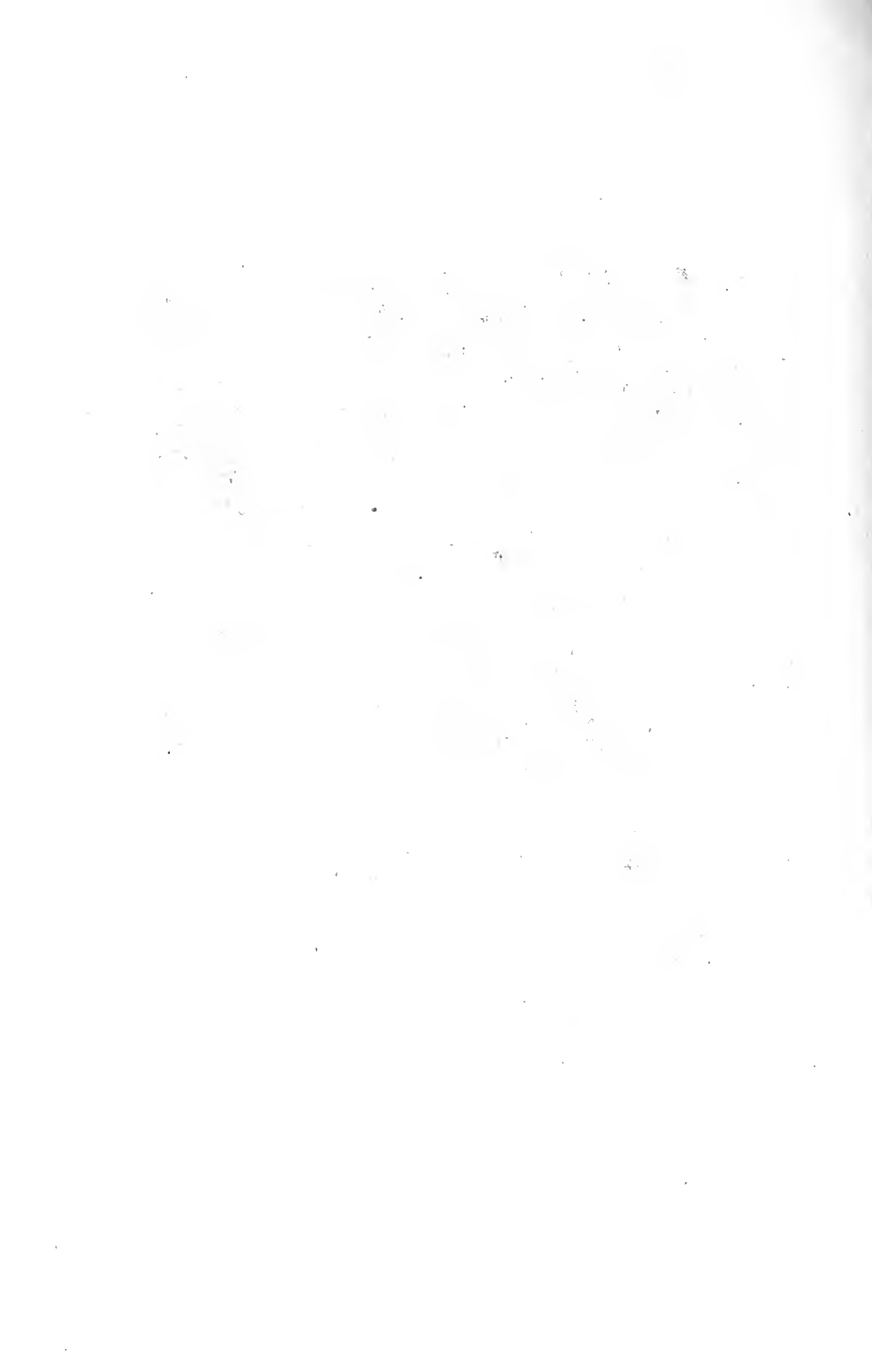
THE briefest glance over the plays of the first epoch in the work of Shakespeare will suffice to show how protracted was the struggle, and how gradual the defeat of rhyme. Setting aside the retouched plays, we find on the list one tragedy, two histories, and four, if not five, comedies, which the least critical reader would attribute to this first epoch of work. In three of these comedies rhyme can hardly be said to be beaten ; that is, the rhyming scenes are, on the whole, equal to the unrhymed in power and beauty. In the single tragedy, and in one of the two histories, we may say that rhyme fights hard for life, but is undeniably worsted ; that is, they contain as to quantity a large proportion of rhymed verse, but as to quality the rhymed part bears no proportion whatever to the unrhymed. In two scenes we may say that the whole heart or spirit of *Romeo and Juliet* is summed up and distilled into perfect and pure expression ; and these two are written in blank verse of equable and blameless melody. Outside the garden scene in the second act, and the balcony scene in the third, there is much that is fanciful and graceful, much of elegiac pathos and fervid, if fantastic passion ; much also of superfluous rhetoric, and (as it were) of wordy melody, which flows and foams hither and thither with something of extravagance and excess ; but in these two there is no flow, no outbreak, no superflux, and no failure. Throughout certain scenes of the third and fourth acts I think it may be reasonably and reverently allowed that the river of verse has broken its banks, not as yet through the force and weight of its gathering stream, but merely through the weakness of the barriers or boundaries found insufficient to confine it. And here we may with deference venture on a guess why Shakespeare was so long loth to forego the restraint of rhyme. When he wrote, and even when he re-wrote, or at least retouched his youngest tragedy he had not yet the

strength to walk straight in the steps of the mighty master, but two months older than himself by birth, whose foot never from the first faltered in the arduous path of severer tragic verse. The loveliest of love-plays is after all a child of "his salad days when he was green in judgment," though assuredly not "cold in blood"—a physical condition as difficult to conceive of Shakespeare at any age as of Cleopatra. It is in the scenes of vehement passion, of ardour and of agony, that we feel the comparative weakness of a yet ungrown hand, the tentative uncertain grasp of a stripling giant. The two utterly beautiful scenes are not of this kind; they deal with simple joy and with simple sorrow, with the gladness of meeting and the sadness of parting love; but between and behind them come scenes of more fierce emotion, full of surprise, of violence, of unrest; and with these the poet is not yet (if I dare say so) quite strong enough to deal. Apollo has not yet put on the sinews of Hercules. At a later date we may fancy or may find that when the Herculean muscle is full grown, the voice in him which was as the voice of Apollo is for a passing moment impaired. In *Measure for Measure*, where the adult and gigantic god has grappled with the greatest and most terrible of energies and of passions, we miss the music of a younger note that rang through *Romeo and Juliet*; but before the end this too revives, as pure, as sweet, as fresh, but richer now and deeper than its first clear notes of the morning, in the heavenly harmony of *Cymbeline* and the *Tempest*.

A. C. SWINBURNE.—*The Three Stages of Shakespeare*,  
*The Fortnightly Review*, May 1875, pp. 627—28.



Romeo and Julia





ROMEO AND JULIET.

ACT V.

SCENE III. *A churchyard; in it a tomb belonging to the Capulets.*

Friar LAURENCE *without*; ROMEO *dead*, and JULIET *in the tomb*.

*Fri. L.* Romeo!  
[*Advances.*]

Alack, alack, what blood is this, which stains  
The stony entrance of this sepulchre?  
What mean these masterless and gory swords  
To lie discolour'd by this place of peace?

[*Enters the tomb.*]

Romeo! O, pale! Who else? what, Paris too?  
And steep'd in blood? Ah, what an unkind hour  
Is guilty of this lamentable chance!

The lady stirs. [*Juliet wakes.*]

*Ful.* O comfortable friar! where is my lord?  
I do remember well where I should be,  
And there I am. Where is my Romeo?

[*Noise within.*]

*Fri. L.* I hear some noise. Lady, come from  
that nest

Of death, contagion, and unnatural sleep:  
A greater power than we can contradict  
Hath thwarted our intents. Come, come away.  
Thy husband in thy bosom there lies dead;  
And Paris too. Come, I'll dispose of thee  
Among a sisterhood of holy nuns:  
Stay not to question, for the watch is coming;  
Come, go, good Juliet [*Noise again*], I dare no  
longer stay.

*Ful.* Go, get thee hence, for I will not away.  
[*Exit Fri. L.*]

What's here? a cup, closed in my true love's  
hand?

Poison, I see, hath been his timeless end:  
O churl! drunk all, and left no friendly drop  
To help me after? I will kiss thy lips;  
Haply some poison yet doth hang on them,  
To make me die with a restorative. [*Kisses him.*]  
Thy lips are warm.

*First Watch.* [*Within*] Lead, boy: which way?

*Ful.* Yea, noise? then I'll be brief. O happy  
dagger! [*Snatching Romeo's dagger.*]  
This is thy sheath [*Stabs herself*]; there rust,  
and let me die.

[*Falls on Romeo's body, and dies.*]

VEHEMENCE OF PASSION AND PRECIPITANCY OF ACTION IN  
"ROMEO AND JULIET."

THIS breathless rapidity of incidents, this hasty interchange—nay, this closest interweaving and association of rapture and misery in the distribution of the plot, is in sympathy with the characteristic passion that gives the central impulse, on which all depends. The hasty precipitancy of the passion of Romeo and Juliet is the ruling motive with which all the accompaniments harmonize, as it seems the highest expression of a prevailing tendency of the age and the clime. Indifferent accidents dispose themselves to aid, like the appearance of Juliet at the balcony; and love does not follow on first sight more surely than mutual avowal and full confidence at the earliest interview, and contract and completion at hastening and undeferred opportunity. The union of delicacy and frank affection and glowing passion in Juliet is something too sacred for criticism, which can but turn such divinity to profanation . . . .

The love of Romeo, again, with all its vehement intensity and seeming extravagance, is preserved to our respect by the proof that it tends rather to regulate than extinguish the more peculiarly manly sentiment. When elate from marriage he lights upon his friends skirmishing with his new kinsfolk in anger, sudden and violent as his own love, he opposes calmness and expostulation to insult, though not without self-reproach when his friend is hurt beside him, and indeed through his interference; and when he hears that he is dead and Tybalt returns in triumph, reason how we may, it is with advantage to our feeling for his character that he thrusts his love aside and vindicates in mortal attack his own honour and his friend.

Thus the very checks to the violence of passion are sudden and violent as itself, and resolution passes from one extreme to the other, from despair to desperate remedy, by natural recoil. When feelings either of love or of hate are so excitable, the best intervention is foiled and disappointed, or only ministers occasion for new embarrassment or outrage. It is the calm Benvolio who induces Romeo to seek a cure for his love of Rosaline at the ball of the Capulets, where a more fatal love awaited him; Capulet checks Tybalt at the mask, where his interference might at least have prevented the accosting of Juliet by Romeo; Mercutio, in his eagerness to forestall Tybalt's challenge of Romeo, destroys his friend and himself also; Romeo himself, when he rushes between combatants, gives occasion for one to receive mortal hurt under his arm; the foolish and tyrannical parents, who would comfort their grieving daughter, do it in a harsh, unfeeling wise that brings her to her grave; and the hasty message of Balthasar, who does not wait to communicate with Friar Laurence, is fatal to his master. Friar Laurence himself has the calmness and right meaning of Benvolio, with knowledge of human nature that teaches him how far it is to be hoped to eradicate passion, and at what point the utmost hope is to control it and direct it to good end. But even his aid participates in the destiny that attends all who would guide precipitateness that is practically uncontrollable. . . .

The lovers are punished it may be said for their haste and rashness, their disobedience of parents, their unsanctioned contract, their excessive engrossment by a passion that is at last not heavenly love but earthly, and many more are the hard words that would as readily as justly apply. They are punished by the agonies of their chequered union, by deprivation after brief enjoyment of the happiness they ran such risks to seize, and the misdeeds of their earlier course bring them at last to the irretrievable misery and crime of self-destruction. It is most certain, however, that these are not the sentiments with which the conclusion of the drama leaves us imbued; our hearts are melted at the unhappy fate of the lovers, and pure commiseration, undisturbed by any thought of anger, bedews their hapless tomb. How then? Did Shakespeare suborn our feelings against our better judgment? Has he by false colour withdrawn our

attention from the really blameworthy, and cast a false halo around wickedness and selfishness and wrong, and made a scapegoat for our maledictions of the allies and parents who in truth should engross our sympathy and pity? Neither is this so; so long as English poetry remains, the story of Romeo and Juliet will be felt as the blameless vindication of the rights and privileges of devoted love; the picture which no associated suffering can render less attractive of the purest and the highest happiness the human heart can feel; the bright imagination, if no more, of that last true and sympathetic touch which, so long as unknown—let us less severely and more hopefully say so long as unbelieved as a possibility—leaves the heart, however else expanded, the victim of the sense that after all it is alone; that it is at best but a foreigner in a strange land, among strange tongues, strange faces, at best entertained and occupied by curiosity, but ever prepared to find seeming sincerity and sympathy reveal themselves as the hypocrisy of indifference or design.

Never then was or will a heart be deterred from love, however dangerous, by the story of Romeo and Juliet; though many may be those which shrink with sympathetic suffering and regret as Romeo, untaught by warnings of previous wilfulness, sinks by his own rash wrong act into senselessness the very moment before it is known his waking wife would have risen from her seeming shroud to reward a stronger self-control. But still the misery of the end has a double source, and that which is the chief lies without the nature and the conduct of the lovers, in the fierce animosities of civil rivalry on the one hand, and on the other quite as fatally in the inconsiderate heartlessness that controls the unwilling—or as bad, the inexperienced—into heartless marriage. It is by exciting awe and pity at the consequences of such misdeeds, or at least in promoting the sensibility to such feelings at more real incidents when they arise, that the poet becomes the ultimate lawgiver, and reaches actions which neither law nor institution can influence or approach.

Romeo and Juliet, then, displays the encounter of two natures prone or prepared to love, and with that native suitability to each other that renders instantaneous passion at first sight the apparently natural consequence of meeting—a predetermined destiny of the order of the world. Their ages are those at which love first opens and seeks its object when it awakens, as the new-born eye expects the light; they live under the Southern sun that warms into beauty all the objects of the finer senses and seems to refine the senses with them, where it seems most natural that speech should be harmonious, that language should mould itself without effort or constraint into melody and poetry, that colours and forms should spontaneously distinguish themselves in their various combinations as readily by their fitness of harmony and contrast as by their mere obvious diversity, where the odorous air seems fragrant from the immediate heart of health-breathing nature, and the features and form of man become the nearest

approach to the perfect expression of every charm that can attend the grace of life. Fortune and friends are close and warm and zealous around each of them; equality in honours, and proximity in place, preclude the obstacles and accidents that violently separate so many hearts, and every influence but one conspires as happily to give birth to the passion as to crown its success.

The single obstacle is the bitter enmity of their rival houses, set in opposition by an antipathy that seems as characteristic of the clime as the sympathetic passion of the lovers; it is kindled by a word, exasperated by a look, and rushes to its gratification and its ruin with the like single, unconsidering, and headstrong impetuosity. Such was Verona then, and such still is Italy; the land where the vehemence of love has most to excite and most to excuse it, but where the germ of dissension is ever rife beside it; and when Friar Laurence finds a moral for his osier cage of simples—depositories side by side within the same flower of poison and medicine—it is rather a national reminiscence than a principle of human nature, . . . that brings up the two opposed kings, Grace and rude Will, encamping in man as well as herbs.

The drama represents—as all dramas, more or less—the clash and conflict of these rival powers; the powers of Love and Hatred join in civil close; Love, it is true, is crushed and mangled in the fray, but its holier spirit and better purpose is not unrewarded or effectless; true the lovers perish, the victims no less of their own precipitation than of their hasty enemies; but something of their passion still lives in power, and it is across the bodies of the breathless pair, as over an atoning sacrifice, that hands that were so lately clenched in reckless and unreasoning animosity, are joined in relenting tenderness and the cordiality that grows by common tears.

W. W. LLOYD.—*Essays on the Life and Plays of Shakspeare*  
(1858): “*Romeo and Juliet.*”

#### IRONY OF THE CLOSING SCENE OF “ROMEO AND JULIET.”

THE dead lovers stand nobly transfigured before our eyes, and no effeminate emotion, no bitter pain, mingles with the exalted feeling by which we are possessed. But there is no want of the grand irony of life, and there ought to be none. Having resigned ourselves to the thought just suggested, and to the elevated feeling which the reconciliation above the lovers' grave must awaken, a keener emotion arises, and we ask the now united heads of the rival houses, “Why did you not end your foolish strife earlier? If you were longing for blood, why could not the blood of Tybalt and Mercutio content you? It inflamed you the more, and only now, when you are robbed of your houses' dearest

treasures, when the blooming lives of Juliet, Romeo, and Paris lie crushed at your feet, only now are you weary and wretched enough to be reasonable. Now, desolate old men, when you have scarcely anything left to love, you are ready to see to it that no further loss shall be borne. It needs only a few words from the Prince, and over those corpses you join hands no longer able to wield the sword, and you hardly know what you have been quarrelling about. The best result of your reconciliation your servants will enjoy; for Sampson, Gregory, Abraham, and Balthasar will be no longer under the necessity of brawling on your account in the streets of Verona, and the disturbances caused by you will cease."

As I have said, these thoughts are not to be avoided, and although the poet has not clothed them in words, he yet presents them to us. He sought not merely to dramatize a touching love-story, but to portray deeper human life. If we look carefully at this in Shakespeare's mirror, emotion, exultation, and irony fill us in harmonious accord. Even the irony so sharply pronounced at the close is not overpowering, for the thought prevails, "Better late than never," and the peace of a city is precious enough not to be purchased too dearly at the cost of five lives.

FRANZ HORN.—*Shakespeare's Schauspiele erläutert* (1823), vol. i. pp. 252—253.

(Translated by H. H. Furness. *Variorum Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet*, pp. 447—448.)

### THE DÉNOUEMENT AND CLOSE OF THE TRAGEDY.

THE tragedy has been sometimes criticised in that its *dénouement* is brought about by a trifling accident. It is only a seeming accident; the tragic fate lies in the character of Juliet, and especially of Romeo. Had he been calmer, more cautious, less familiar with the idea of suicide, he would not have been Romeo; he ought to have investigated the matter, taken pains to inform himself, visited the Friar, and there would have been no tragedy. He must, Juliet must, perish; the necessity lay in their very natures. And that the blossom of their loves so quickly withered, and that the whole happiness of their lives was compressed to the short span of a summer night, this is the elegiac wail of our mortality that accompanies all joy and all beauty. Never before in any poem have longing, love, passion, tenderness, and the grave, death, despair with all the horrors of corruption, been so intimately intermingled; never before have these sentiments and emotions been brought into such intimate contact without counteracting and neutralizing each other, as in this single most wondrous creation.

I need not say how great is the mistake that any rearrangement of this tragedy makes

which permits Juliet to awake before the death of Romeo ; and yet Garrick fell into this error, and many a spectator has applauded this barbarous mutilation. Such a horrible situation scatters all our previous sympathy ; nay, thrusts our feelings to the very verge of the ridiculous and of insipidity. If this situation cannot be tragically interpreted, still less can it be interpreted musically ; and yet in the opera by Zingarelli, in this scene is one of the best and most pathetic arias.

Shakespeare was eminently right in not closing the tragedy with the death of Juliet, however much our modern patience may demand it. Not only do the affecting reconciliation of the two old foes and the vindication of Friar Laurence make the continuation necessary, but so it must be chiefly in order that, after misfortune has done its worst, the true idea of the tragedy, its glorified essence, may rise before our souls that up to this point have been too sorely tried and too violently affected to perceive the inmost meaning of the poem, or to take a painful yet clear survey of it. Schiller, in his preface to the *Bride of Messina*, expresses the opinion, singular to say the least, that Shakespeare's dramas stand peculiarly in need of a Chorus; after the manner of a Greek tragedy, in order fully to express their meaning. Here and in all Shakespeare's tragedies, without any such aid, there is just as much, if not more, done for us ; and it is inconceivable how a genius like Schiller's could fail to see this, or so to permit his prejudices to blind him.

LUDWIG TIECK.—*Dramaturgische Blätter*, vol. i. p. 256. Translated by H. H.

Furness. *Variorum Shakespeare : Romeo and Juliet*, pp. 459—450.

### GARRICK'S VERSION.

THE reader will be interested in comparing Garrick's version of the death-scene, condemned by Tieck in the preceding extract, with Shakespeare's treatment of the same subject. It may be mentioned that while Brooke, in his *Romeus and Juliet*, and Paynter conclude the story as Shakespeare does—(Shakespeare generally having followed the narrative of Brooke)—in Luigi da Porto's narrative, and in Bandello's novel founded upon it, Juliet "recovers her senses in time to hear Romeo speak, and to see him expire ; instead of stabbing herself with his dagger, she expires, as it were, of a broken heart on the body of her lover."

Garrick's version is the following :—

*Romeo.* Soft !—she breathes and stirs !

*Juliet.* Where am I ?—Defend me, powers !

*Rom.* She speaks, she lives, and we shall still be bless'd !

My kind propitious stars o'erpay me now

For all my sorrows past. Rise, rise, my Juliet,

And from this cave of death, this house of horror,  
Quick let me snatch thee in thy Romeo's arms,  
There breathes a vital spirit in thy lips,  
And call thee back my soul to life and love.

[*Raises her.*]

*Jul.* Bless me ! how cold it is—Who's there ?

*Rom.* Thy husband ;

'Tis thy Romeo, Juliet ; rais'd from despair  
To joys unutterable ! Quit, quit the place,  
And let us fly together.

[*Brings her from the tomb.*]

*Jul.* Why do you force me so ? I'll ne'er consent—

My strength may fail me but my will's unmoved—

I'll not wed Paris—Romeo is my husband.

*Rom.* Romeo is thy husband ; I am that Romeo,  
Nor all the opposing powers of earth or man  
Shall break our bonds or tear thee from my heart.

*Jul.* I know that voice, its magic sweetness wakes  
My tranced soul—I now remember well  
Each circumstance—O my lord, my husband !—  
Dost thou avoid me, Romeo ? Let me touch  
Thy hand, and taste the cordial of thy lips—  
You fright me—speak—O, let me hear some voice  
Besides my own, in this drear vault of death,  
Or I shall faint.—Support me—

*Rom.* O, I cannot ;

I have no strength ; but want thy feeble aid.—  
Cruel poison !

*Jul.* Poison ! What means my lord ? Thy trembling voice,  
Pale lips and swimming eyes, death's in thy face.

*Rom.* It is indeed—I struggle with him now ;  
The transports that I felt  
To hear thee speak, and see thy opening eyes,  
Stopped, for a moment, his impetuous course,  
And all my mind was happiness and thee ;—  
And now the poison rushes through my veins ;—  
I have not time to tell,—  
Fate brought me to this place to take a last,  
Last farewell of my love, and with thee die.

*Jul.* Die ? Was the friar false ?

*Rom.* I know not that.—

I thought thee dead, distracted at the sight,—  
O fatal speed ! drank poison, kiss'd thy lips,  
And found within thy arms a precious grave :—  
But, in that moment—O !—

*Jul.* And did I wake for this ?

*Rom.* My powers are blasted ;

'Tixt love and death I'm torn, I am distracted ;  
But death's strongest—And must I leave thee, Juliet ?  
O cruel, cursed fate ! in sight of Heaven,—

*Jul.* Thou rav'st ; lean on my breast.

*Rom.* Fathers have flinty hearts, no tears can melt 'em ;—  
Nature pleads in vain ; children must be wretched.

*Jul.* O my breaking heart !

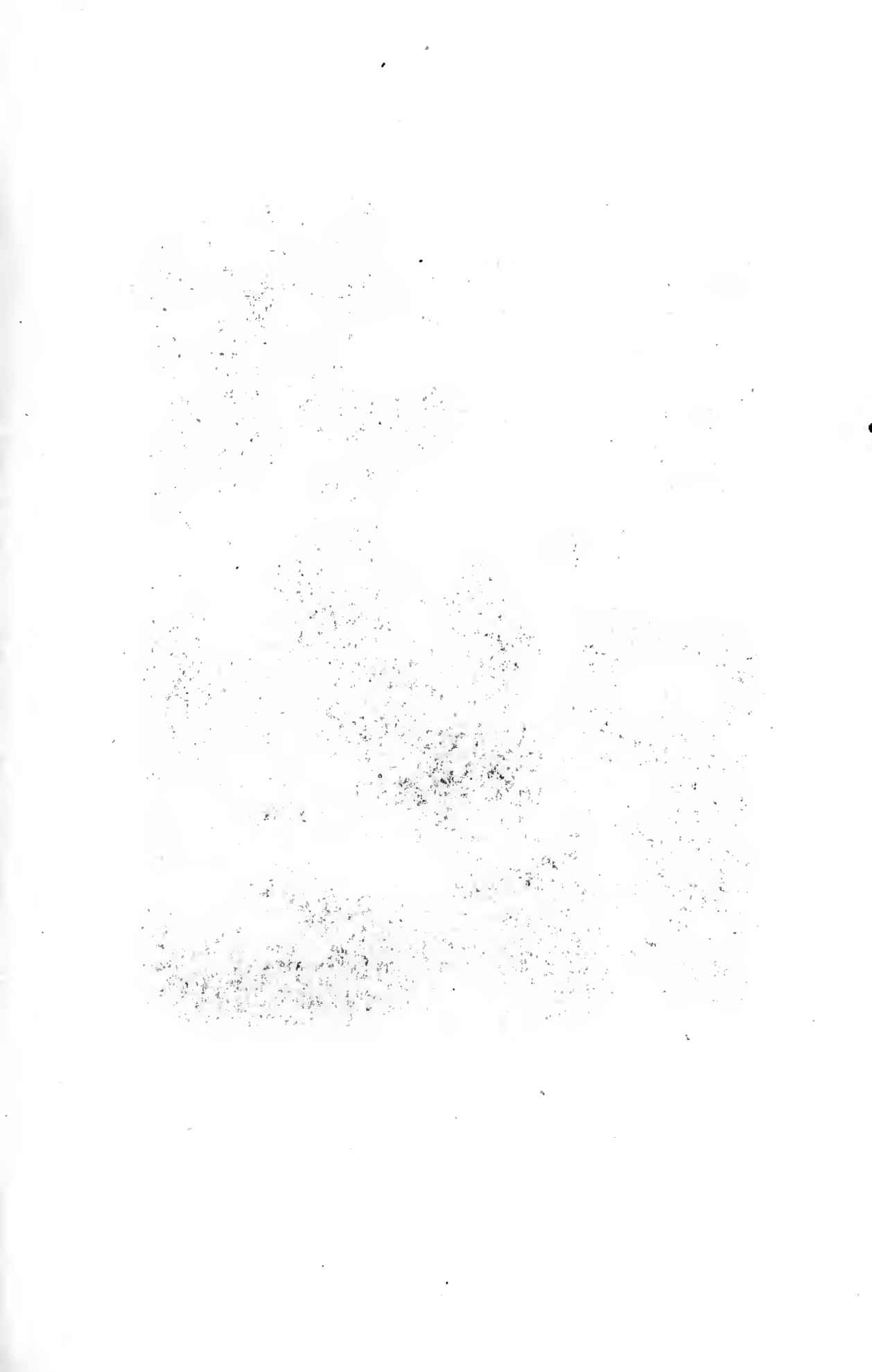
*Rom.* She is my wife—our hearts are twin'd together,—  
Capulet, forbear ; Paris, loose your hold ;—  
Pull not our heart-strings thus ; they crack,—they break,—  
O Juliet, Juliet !—

[*Dies. Juliet faints on Romeo's body.*]

George Fletcher, commenting upon this version of Garrick, remarks :—

“The greater part of this *improvement* demands no comment, but it may be well to point out the especial absurdity of the concluding sentences, in which Romeo is made to exclaim against ‘fathers’ and against ‘Paris.’ Romeo himself, we have seen, has a peculiarly tender father ; and Shakespeare has studiously kept him ignorant, both of Capulet’s brutality to Juliet, and of Paris’s impertinence,—in order that, in Romeo’s final scene, no harsher feeling might interfere to disturb those harmonizing sentiments of love and pity in the hero’s breast which so exquisitely soften the tragic interest of his parting moments. In like manner compare Shakespeare’s representation of Juliet’s deportment on reviving,—so remote from resentment against the Friar, whom she knows to deserve it so little,—or even against that Fortune of whom she is really the victim,—with Garrick’s improved version of it, after he has actually made the Friar arrive *behind* his appointed time. . . . And then, as if to remove the last chance of bringing back our apprehensions in any degree towards the dignity of Shakespeare’s own conception, the religiously solemn closing scene of explanation, admonition, repentance, and reconciliation is utterly suppressed !”—*Studies of Shakespeare*, pp. 374—375.







*F. Schell del.*

*A. Krause sc.*

*König Richard der Zweite - King Richard the second.*

## KING RICHARD II.

## ACT V.

SCENE VI. *Windsor Castle.*

\* \* \* \*

*Enter* EXTON, *with persons bearing a coffin.**Exton.* Great king, within this coffin I presentThy buried fear : herein all breathless lies  
The mightiest of thy greatest enemies,  
Richard of Bordeaux, by me hither brought.*Bolingbroke.* Exton, I thank thee not ; for  
thou hast wroughtA deed of slander with thy fatal hand  
Upon my head and all this famous land.*Exton.* From your own mouth, my lord, did  
I this deed.*Boling.* They love not poison that do poison  
need,Nor do I thee : though I did wish him dead,  
I hate the murderer, love him murdered.  
The guilt of conscience take thou for thy labour  
But neither my good word nor princely favour :  
With Cain go wander through the shades of night,  
And never show thy head by day nor light.  
Lords, I protest, my soul is full of woe,  
That blood should sprinkle me to make me grow :  
Come, mourn with me for that I do lament,  
And put on sullen black incontinent :  
I'll make a voyage to the Holy Land,  
To wash this blood off from my guilty hand :  
March sadly after ; grace my mournings here ;  
In weeping after this untimely bier. [*Exeunt.*]CONNECTION EXISTING BETWEEN THE ENGLISH HISTORICAL  
PLAYS.<sup>1</sup>

THE dramas derived from the English history, ten in number, form one of the most valuable of Shakespeare's works, and partly the fruit of his maturest age. I say advisedly one of his works, for the poet evidently intended them to form one great whole. It is, as it were, an historical, heroic poem in the dramatic form, of which the separate plays constitute the rhapsodies. The principal features of the events are exhibited with such fidelity, their causes, and even their secret springs, are placed in such a clear light, that we may attain from them a knowledge of history in all its truth, while the living picture makes an impression on the imagination which can never be effaced. But this series of dramas is intended as the vehicle of a much higher and much more general instruction ; it furnishes examples of the political course of the world applicable to all times. This mirror of kings should be the manual of young princes ; from it they may learn the intrinsic dignity of their hereditary vocation, but they will also learn from it the difficulties of their situation, the dangers of usurpation, the

<sup>1</sup> The interesting view given in this extract from Schlegel of the connection existing between Shakespeare's English historical plays, must be taken as modified by the truth stated by Mr. R. Grant White, in an extract given to illustrate the play of *King John*. It is not to be supposed that Shakespeare set out with a design of teaching English history, or offering a

philosophical study of its causes and effects ; but as he progressed the connection between the several plays must have become more and more clear to him ; and he evidently at all times had a remarkable mental grasp of the forces—personal and impersonal—which brought about the series of great historical events.

inevitable fall of tyranny, which buries itself under its attempts to obtain a firmer foundation ; lastly, the ruinous consequences of the weaknesses, errors, and crimes of kings, for whole nations, and many subsequent generations. Eight of these plays, from *Richard II.* to *Richard III.* are linked together in an uninterrupted succession, and embrace a most eventful period of nearly a century of English history. The events portrayed in them not only follow one another, but they are linked in the closest and most exact connection ; and the cycle of revolts, parties, civil and foreign wars, which began with the deposition of Richard II., first ends with the accession of Henry VII. to the throne. The careless rule of the first of these monarchs, and his injudicious treatment of his own relations drew upon him the rebellion of Bolingbroke ; his dethronement, however, was, in point of form, altogether unjust, and in no case could Bolingbroke be considered the rightful heir to the crown. This shrewd founder of the House of Lancaster never as Henry IV. enjoyed the fruits of his usurpation : his turbulent barons, the same who aided him in ascending the throne, allowed him not a moment's repose upon it. On the other hand, he was jealous of the brilliant qualities of his son, and this distrust, more than any really low inclination, induced the prince, that he might avoid every appearance of ambition, to give himself up to dissolute society. These two circumstances form the subject-matter of the two parts of *Henry IV.* ; the enterprises of the discontented make up the serious, and the wild youthful frolics of the heir-apparent supply the comic scenes. When this warlike prince ascended the throne under the name of Henry V., he was determined to assert his ambiguous title ; he considered foreign conquests as the best means of guarding against internal disturbances, and this gave rise to the glorious, but more ruinous than profitable, war with France, which Shakespeare has celebrated in the drama of *Henry V.* The early death of this king, the long legal minority of Henry VI., and his perpetual minority in the art of government, brought the greatest troubles on England. The dissensions of the Regents, and the consequently wretched administration, occasioned the loss of the French conquests ; and there arose a bold candidate for the crown, whose title was indisputable, if the prescription of three governments may not be assumed to confer legitimacy on usurpation. Such was the origin of the wars between the Houses of York and Lancaster, which desolated the kingdom for a number of years, and ended with the victory of the House of York. All this Shakespeare has represented in the three parts of *Henry VI.* Edward IV. shortened his life by excesses, and did not long enjoy the throne purchased at the expense of so many cruel deeds. His brother Richard, who had a great share in the elevation of the House of York, was not contented with the regency, and his ambition paved himself a way to the throne through treachery and violence ; but his gloomy tyranny made him the object of the people's hatred, and at length drew on him the destruction which he merited. He was conquered by a descendant of the royal house unstained by the guilt of the civil

wars, and what might seem defective in his title was made good by the merit of freeing his country from a monster. With the accession of Henry VII. to the throne, a new epoch of English history begins: the curse seemed at length to be expiated, and the long series of usurpations, revolts, and civil wars, occasioned by the levity with which the second Richard sported away his crown, was now brought to a termination.

Such is the evident connection of these eight plays with each other, but they were not, however, composed in chronological order. According to all appearance, the four last were first written; this is certain, indeed, with respect to the three parts of *Henry VI.*; and *Richard III.* is not only from its subject a continuation of these, but is also composed in the same style. Shakespeare then went back to *Richard II.*, and with the most careful art connected the second series with the first. The trilogies of the ancients have already given us an example of the possibility of forming a perfect dramatic whole, which shall yet contain allusions to something which goes before, and follows it. In like manner the most of these plays end with a very definite division in the history; *Richard II.* with the murder of that king; the Second Part of *Henry IV.* with the accession of his son to the throne; *Henry V.* with the conclusion of peace with France; the First Part of *Henry VI.* also with a treaty of peace; the third with the murder of Henry, and Edward's elevation to the throne; *Richard III.* with his overthrow and death. The First Part of *Henry IV.* and the Second of *Henry VI.* are rounded off in a less satisfactory manner. The revolt of the nobles was only half quelled by the overthrow of Percy, and it is therefore continued through the following part of the piece. The victory of York at St. Alban's could as little be considered a decisive event, in the war of the two Houses. Shakespeare has fallen into this dramatic imperfection, if we may so call it, for the sake of advantages of much importance. The picture of the civil war was too great and too rich in dreadful events for a single drama, and yet the uninterrupted series of events offered no more convenient resting-place. The government of Henry IV. might certainly have been comprehended in one piece, but it possesses too little tragical interest, and too little historical splendour, to be attractive, if handled in a serious manner throughout. Hence, Shakespeare has given to the comic characters belonging to the retinue of Prince Henry the freest development, and the half of the space is occupied by this constant interlude between the political events.

The two other historical plays taken from English history are chronologically separate from this series. King John reigned nearly two centuries before Richard II., and between Richard III. and Henry VIII. comes the long reign of Henry VII., which Shakespeare justly passed over as unsusceptible of dramatic interest. However, these two plays may in some measure be considered as the prologue and epilogue to the other eight. In *King John* all the political and national motives which play so great a part in the following pieces are already indicated—wars and treaties with France, a usurpation, and the tyrannical

actions which it draws after it, the influence of the clergy, the factions of the nobles. *Henry VIII.* again shows us the transition to another age; the policy of modern Europe, a refined court life under a voluptuous monarch, the dangerous situation of favourites, who, after having assisted in effecting the fall of others, are themselves precipitated from power; in a word, despotism under a milder form, but not less unjust and cruel. By the prophecies on the birth of Elizabeth, Shakespeare has in some degree brought his great poem on English history down to his own time, as far, at least, as such recent events could be yet handled with security. He composed probably the two plays of *King John* and *Henry VIII.* at a later period as an addition to the others.

A. W. SCHLEGEL.—*Lectures on Dramatic Art.* Translated  
by John Black (1846) pp. 419—423.

## KING RICHARD II.

It is a most fortunate circumstance for Shakespeare's readers that the historical plays were not written in a chronological order corresponding with that of the events represented. We know that the fourfold tragedy of the House of York—comprising the three parts of *Henry VI.* and *Richard III.*—was written first, in that earliest period of Shakespeare's poetic career when he was still contending for a mastery over form, and was trying his strength in the rehandling of works which were not his own. Not until he had attained his complete development, in the full ripeness of his adult powers, did he produce, in the course of a few years, with one continuous flow, and entirely from his own resources, the dramatic history of the Lancastrian period,—during the years 1596-1599. Thus the reader enjoys the inestimable advantage of a masterly introduction to the varied and confused relations of men and events in the period represented; our sympathy is engaged at the outset by works of art of the utmost beauty and perfection; the less inviting study of *Henry VI.* becomes, through what has preceded it, of true and lively interest; we are in a position to follow the deeper course of historical development, where the accumulation of materials, not wrought in certain parts to a uniform perfection, might conceal it; and the terrible untwisting of the entangled web in *Richard III.* affects us as with the power of a majestic revealing of that moral necessity upon which, in Shakespeare's view of the world, all human development, alike in public life and in the destiny of the individual, reposes. . . .

*Richard II.* lies closer to the facts of history than perhaps any other of the historical plays. With the exception of one remarkable scene . . . . Shakespeare has in no way altered the main outline of events. He has almost wholly refrained from inventing subordinate characters, like those on whom he relies for an essential part of the interest

of *Henry IV.* Evidently he regarded the natural course of events as sufficiently dramatic and significant to secure the spectator's sympathy without the adornments of art. . . .

The characters of the play fall naturally into two chief groups. In the one stands pre-eminent the unhappy king, surrounded by the rotten props of his tottering legitimacy,—Aumerle, like himself, thoughtless and hot-headed, and the well-meaning, powerless York; in the other is gathered a company of bold, determined nobles around the deep and crafty politician, Bolingbroke: Carlisle, the gallant bishop, stands in the midst, like a pillar which cannot stay the wreck of things, but which points amidst the fragments of a destroyed order in warning to heaven; while in old Gaunt the poet has known how to mingle with extraordinary skill and delicacy the sentiments and habits of a better time with his son's political genius and designs.

The most detailed study of character is that of Richard. To the gifts bestowed upon him by fortune, Nature has added her inestimable letter of commendation—an exterior not merely imposing, but truly beautiful and royal. Old York compares him pathetically with his father, the Black Prince, the flower of knighthood, fiercer in war than the lion, and in peace milder than the lamb:—

“ His face thou hast, for even so look'd he,  
Accomplish'd with the number of thy hours.”

. . . . The most graceful bearing, the most infallible tact of manner, when he thinks it worth his trouble, come to the aid of this brilliant appearance. Not without reason does Percy (in *Henry IV.*) remember him as his “lovely rose.” The entire part of the queen,—departing as it does from historical fact,—is apparently designed to exhibit in a conspicuous manner the triumph of this charm of manhood in the deep and passionate attachment of a young and tender wife. . . . It is hardly without significance that the poor groom should steal, at the risk of his life, into Pomfret Castle, merely to look once more upon the face of his dear master, after Bolingbroke has banished the unhappy man not alone from the throne of England, but from the back of beautiful “roan Barbary” . . . . Richard's behaviour, especially in adversity, exhibits everywhere a most sensitive, impressionable heart, a fiery energy of fancy, united with an extraordinary gift of utterance. In capacities and culture he is far from being an evil or what we ordinarily call an insignificant man. And yet he becomes the ruin of himself and of all, who stand near him. The good qualities of his nature become with him useless, nay, even dangerous; he affords the appalling spectacle of an absolute bankrupt not only in externals, but in spirit and in moral nature, and this in consequence of one circumstance—that nature has summoned him who possessed a dilettante character to a position which more than any other required the character of an artist.

Let us explain our meaning: If by the name "dilettante," in a bad sense, we may describe a character which takes nothing seriously except the striving after pleasure, and which possesses no deep-founded and unchangeable conviction, except the faith in one's own right and one's own excellence; strengthened in this by a susceptibility to impressions, and a quickness of perception, which flattery so readily misnames intellect and genius,—then Richard II. appears as if specially created by the poet to stand once for all as the perfect and accepted type of this most modern of all forms of character. Should the spite of Fortune give a dilettante of this kind a part in business or public affairs, a share of influence and power, the sympathising spectator will probably pity the artist nature oppressed by circumstances. He will imagine that he beholds Pegasus in harness, whereas it is only a weak and untrained colt, with no liking for work, wavering to and fro between heedless insolence and fantastic, self-tormenting fear; hard and revengeful towards inferiors and weak opponents, cowardly towards the great and powerful,—and all this because the alternately gleaming and glooming phenomenon is wanting in true substance and the quickening soul,—wanting in that manly will, which freely and completely subordinates the moods and inclinations of the mere individual life to the ends of the whole, which unconditionally devotes itself to the service of the moral order of the universe, and so creates from this order, as from the ultimate source of all life, that strength which subdues the world.

When the action begins we see the brilliantly-endowed, royal dilettante, the flower of knighthood, surrounded by flatterers and parasites of the lowest kind, at variance with the chief of his lords, blind as to his own position with a blindness which proceeds much less from weakness of understanding than from an indisposition to go through the disagreeable task of thoroughly inspecting things. The plans of Bolingbroke are at no time concealed from him,—he has observed the bearing of his ambitious cousin well, and describes it not without spirit and humour. But not for a moment does this restrain him from following the bent of his inclination, from undertaking an adventure in Ireland—having first gratified to the utmost the most daring wishes of his enemies by his breaches of the law of the land. His paroxysm of thoughtless insolence reaches its climax in his conduct towards the noble father of the banished man, whom, before all others, he should have treated with respect. On receiving tidings of the illness of his uncle, he breaks forth in presence of his creatures, in cavalier style and worse, with the words,—

“ Now put it, God, in the physician's mind  
To help him to his grave immediately!  
The lining of his coffers shall make coats  
To deck our soldiers for these Irish wars.  
Come, gentlemen, let's go and visit him:  
Pray God we may make haste and come too late.”



With the *nonchalance* of a laughing heir, he then inquires after the dying man's state, mocks him for his playing on words (which was not meant for sport), and when the anticipation of death has loosed the tongue of the gallant, loyal old man, and he utters himself in bitter warning and predictions, Richard relieves his evil conscience with coarse invective. The genial nephew calls the dying uncle "a lunatic, lean-witted fool," perhaps in order that it may not be noticed how Gaunt's "frosty admonition" has made pale his cheek. And when the old man has died with a curse upon his lips, he seizes in an illegal manner upon the rich inheritance, with the haste of a player, who cannot wait for the new stake; and all this in order that he may intrust the threatened realm to York, exasperated and incapable as he is, and himself proceed on a military promenade to Ireland! This rooted confidence in the most extravagant views of his own legitimacy, and the most careless contempt of the rights and the strength of others, inspirits the king on his return from Ireland to his now invaded realm. The only talent which he possesses in extraordinary measure, that of pathetic and ingenious but never thoughtful and judicious speech, is now roused to its most ambitious flights by his irritative vanity. Declaiming in admirable manner, he calls heaven and earth to witness that "not all the waters in the rough rude sea can wash the balm from an anointed king."

" For every man that Bolingbroke hath press'd  
To lift shrewd steel against our golden crown,  
God for his Richard hath in heavenly pay  
A glorious angel: then, if angels fight,  
Weak men must fall, for heaven still guards the right."

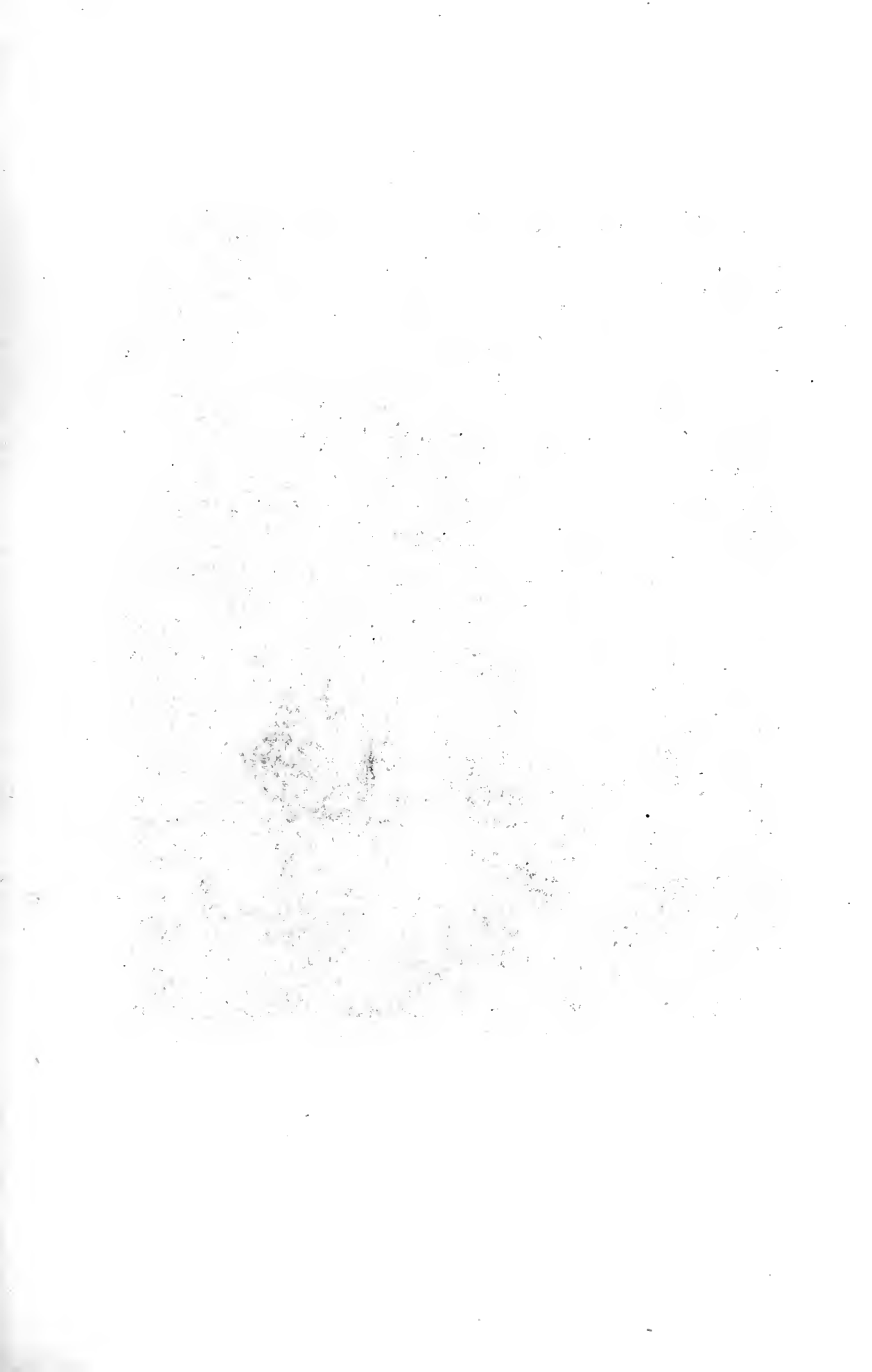
No one could speak in more royal fashion . . . . But the angels do not make their appearance, and moreover the levy of Welshmen is broken and dispersed. The ill-omened word, "Too late—a day too late!" interrupts with shrill dissonance the high-sounding description of his God-established legitimate authority. Then the bubble breaks. He himself orders his friends to fly,—the unbridled fancy runs clean away with his nature, rich with various gifts, but unstable, because never tempered by self-restraint. Now the quickness of his intellect and the liveliness of his feelings become a curse to the man of pleasure. Very characteristic is it when he denounces his cousin who has led him "forth of that sweet way I was in to despair." But his eloquence achieves new triumphs as his deeds become more and more lamentable. Again, "God omnipotent"—at the first meeting with Bolingbroke—will muster in the clouds armies, not this time of angels, but of pestilence to save the legitimate monarch from the consequences of his own deeds. The personal importance of the royal phantom and the hollow notion of legitimacy once more rise in all their shadowy splendour to oppose the veritable power that rests upon the actual state of the nation and the popular consent.

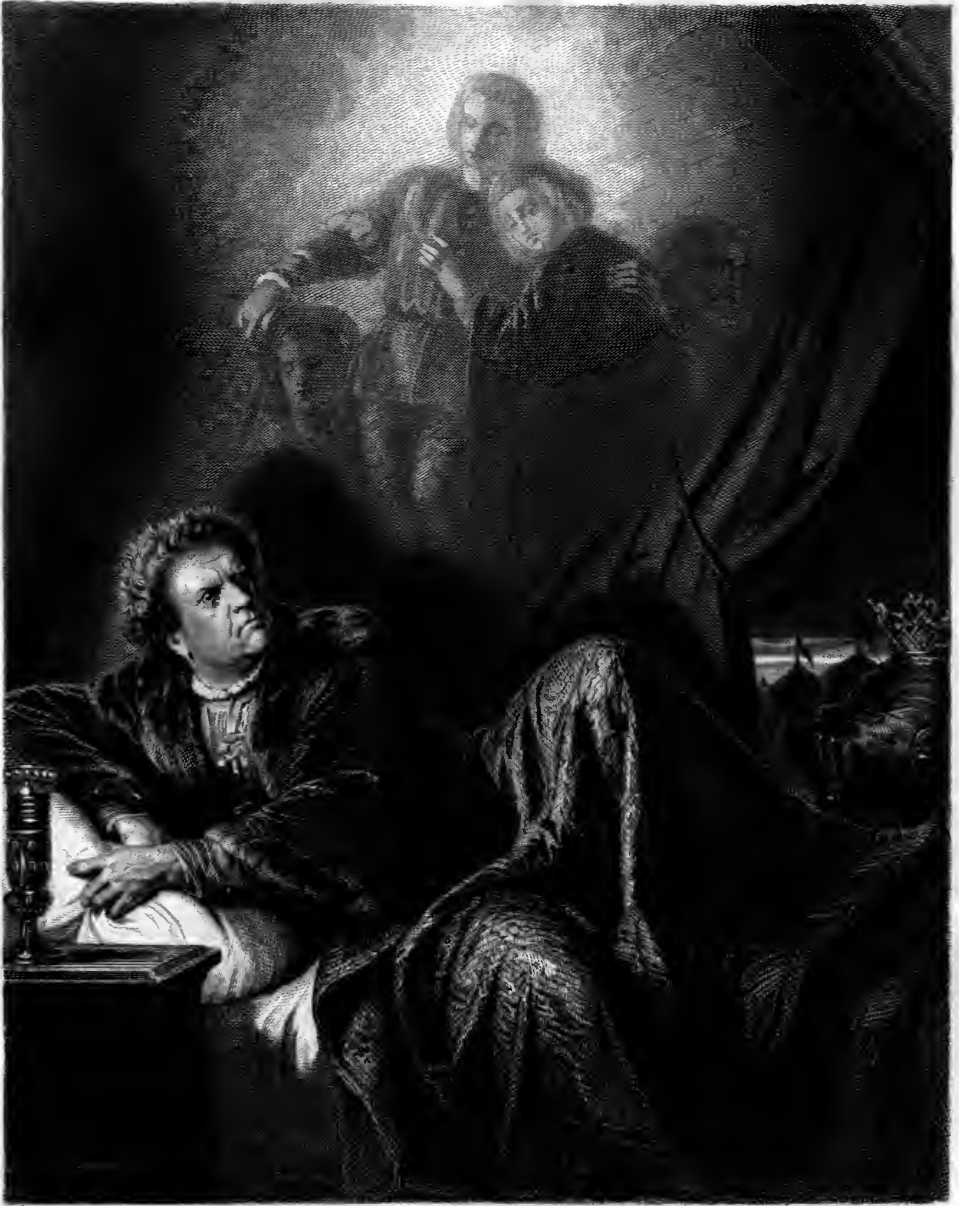
But precisely here the poet shows with masterly clearness the inner necessity of Richard's fall. It is absolutely impossible that the calculating Bolingbroke could reconcile himself with this untrustworthy, proud visionary, who alternates between insolence and despondency, but is at all times filled with vain glory, this ingenious man who mocks with fantastic wit his own misery, instead of soberly considering how he may find a remedy, who only too justly compares himself to

"Glistening Phaethon  
Wanting the manage of unruly jades."

Let no one say, "A rich artistic nature here perishes." This same unbridled fancy, this same immoderate but superficial sensitiveness, which wrecks the King, would also have ruined the poet. The same incoherence of nature accompanies the unhappy man of pleasure through all the remaining stages of his precipitous descent. He has neither courage to oppose ill fortune, nor the self-mastering prudence at least to enter into some assured relation with his victorious rival. First he offers of his own accord to lay down the crown, then he wilfully exhibits his unappeasable resentment. How characteristic is his reply to Bolingbroke's cold demand, "Are you contented to resign the crown?"—"Ay, no ; no, ay ;"—the true motto of such a character. So too in prison, in the depth of his misery, the man sorely stricken by fate remains the same old visionary. Not a thought of repentance,—as little as in danger there had been a moment of true resolution. Nothing but a voluptuous handling of his own wounds, an extravagant and exhausting chase of the fancy, in which the moral nature, intellect, and will are lost. And yet he remains full of wit and cleverness up to the last moment.—"Thanks, noble peer!" he replies to the groom who has addressed him with the words, "Hail, royal prince!" It is a true satisfaction for him and us when a sudden leap-up of wrath, purposeless and inconsiderate indeed, but ennobled by a faint gleam of manly energy, obtains an end of life not without an appeasing, æsthetic propriety, for this incoherent and divided being, this sacrifice to the pursuit of pleasure devoid of energy and manly will, who had for a while been fondled by fortune to his own destruction.

F. KREYSSIG.—*Vorlesungen über Shakespeare* (1874), Vol. II, pp. 177—192.





*In* *White* *del*

*Robt. E. Baer* *sc.*

*King Richard III. - King Richard III.*

## KING RICHARD III.

## ACT V.

SCENE III. *Bosworth Field.* KING RICHARD  
in his tent asleep.

*Enter the Ghosts of the two young Princes.*

*Ghosts.* [*To Richard*] Dream on thy cousins  
smother'd in the Tower :

Let us be lead within thy bosom, Richard,  
And weigh thee down to ruin, shame, and death!  
Thy nephews' souls bid thee despair and die !

[*To Richmond*] Sleep, Richmond, sleep in  
peace, and wake in joy ;

Good angels guard thee from the boar's annoy !  
Live, and beget a happy race of kings !  
Edward's unhappy sons do bid thee flourish.

*Enter the Ghost of LADY ANNE.*

*Ghost.* [*To Richard*] Richard, thy wife, that  
wretched Anne thy wife,  
That never slept a quiet hour with thee,  
Now fills thy sleep with perturbations :  
To-morrow in the battle think on me,  
And fall thy edgeless sword : despair, and die !

[*To Richmond*] Thou quiet soul, sleep thou a  
quiet sleep ;

Dream of success and happy victory !  
Thy adversary's wife doth pray for thee.

*Enter the Ghost of BUCKINGHAM.*

*Ghost.* [*To Richard*] The first was I that  
helped thee to the crown ;

The last was I that felt thy tyranny :  
Oh, in the battle think on Buckingham,  
And die in terror of thy guiltiness !  
Dream on, dream on, of bloody deeds and death :  
Fainting, despair ; despairing, yield thy breath !

[*To Richmond*] I died for hope ere I could  
lend thee aid :

But cheer thy heart, and be thou not dismay'd :  
God and good angels fight on Richmond's side ;  
And Richard falls in height of all his pride.

[*The Ghosts vanish. King Richard starts  
out of his dream.*

*K. Rich.* Give me another horse : bind up  
my wounds.

Have mercy, Jesu !—Soft ! I did but dream.  
O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me !  
The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight.  
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.  
What do I fear ? myself ? there's none else by :  
Richard loves Richard ; that is, I am I.  
Is there a murderer here ? No. Yes, I am :  
Then fly. What, from myself ? Great reason  
why :

Lest I revenge. What, myself upon myself ?  
Alack, I love myself. Wherefore ? for any good  
That I myself have done unto myself ?  
Oh, no ! alas, I rather hate myself.  
For hateful deeds committed by myself !  
I am a villain : yet I lie, I am not.  
Fool, of thyself speak well : fool, do not flatter.  
My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,  
And every tongue brings in a several tale,  
And every tale condemns me for a villain.  
Perjury, perjury, in the high'st degree ;  
Murder, stern murder, in the direst degree ;  
All several sins, all used in each degree,  
Throng to the bar, crying all, Guilty ! guilty !  
I shall despair. There is no creature loves me ;  
And if I die, no soul shall pity me :  
Nay, wherefore should they, since that I myself  
Find in myself no pity to myself ?  
Methought the souls of all that I had murder'd  
Came to my tent ; and every one did threat  
To-morrow's vengeance on the head of Richard.

### RICHARD'S HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, AND PERSONAL CHARACTER.<sup>1</sup>

IF it be true, in a general way, of all characters devoid of moral qualities, which poetry may create and the dramatic art represent, that they must act with a "dæmonic" power, and thereby raise us above the sphere of ordinary reality, this holds good in a pre-eminent degree of Richard III., the most complete and most grandiose villain ever brought into being by poetry, who yet at no moment passes into a colourless abstraction, but impresses us, on the contrary, at all times as an actual living person. In order to understand Richard it is of the utmost importance that we should hold clearly in view the arena on which he is placed. It is not the confined family circle, nor in a narrow sense the *bourgeois* world upon which he lets loose his destructive rage; not that he despises either family relations or civic rights, but what elevate the action of Richard into a higher sphere are rather his criminal assaults upon the life of the State, in the great world of political movement. His field of action is the commonwealth itself, his crimes are immediate invasions of the State, not as with ordinary criminals, secondary and remote attacks. But as history is essentially a series of political developments, Richard, by virtue of the range of his crimes, his designs, and his fall, properly belongs to history. In it the explanation of his appearance must primarily be found, and by the aid of it alone can he be judged. Richard the Third is the product of a conflict between two great Houses, York and Lancaster, which resulted in the constant sacrifice of the State to the self-interest of particular members of these families. But in this conflict gradually every member of the two Houses is so engaged that each one somehow or another incurs a burden of guilt. The entire ground in course of time is hollowed and undermined by crimes—a soil upon which the sense of justice and morality can no longer support itself. The Houses continually transfer to one another the guilt, until the formal right to the crown becomes between them both unrecognizable and a matter of indifference, so entirely obscured has it been through the dark deeds accomplished by either party. Out of this dark bosom of action burdened with crime has Richard sprung, having received as the foundation of his life the previous total corruption of his House. The several features which heretofore have appeared isolated and divided between various individuals now unite themselves in him, to form one collective impression. Thus Richard becomes the terrible image and representative of egoism and despotism. With him disappears the last illusion of a formal right to the throne, under disguise of which

<sup>1</sup> The reader will accept the substantial excellence of this piece of criticism as more than compensation for the difficulties of a somewhat cumbrous

style which it was impossible to escape from in the translation,

all preceding rulers of both houses had concealed their self-interest. Boundless ambition alone confirms the throne to Richard, and the scorn of all the restrictions of morality alone permits him to obtain without trouble the means needful for attaining his object. . . .

As to his right to the throne, Richard deceives himself by no illusion from first to last, for it essentially belongs to his character to practise upon his own soul no kind of self-deception. Having cast aside all sense of awe and shame, he appears as the natural force and instrument employed for reaching and bringing to destruction those who in the universal tumult of the civil war have laid upon themselves a burden of crime, whether it has taken the form of positive misdoing, the savage slaughtering of their opponents, or that of lax and supine moral energy, and a faint and inactive sense of right and wrong. Thus Richard appears primarily as the *Nemesis of the World-spirit*, to strike at the heads of those who have a share in the guilt of the time, and yet have hitherto escaped the arm of justice.

Viewed thus, Richard stands, as it were, upon a lofty pedestal. His arena is the distracted State, his object is the Crown, his absolute significance is that of the *bearer of the historical Spirit*, by whose instrumentality the heads of all those who have disturbed the commonwealth, disorganized the State, and covered themselves with crimes, may be shorn away. In this aspect Richard appears as the destroying genius of the mediæval polity in its period of decline and degeneracy, bringing to an end through his evil deeds the unrighteous conflict, and thereby preparing the ground for that unity of political life which was to rise out of and above the division of society into private interests. But in the process Richard, as the product of this disintegrating society, himself perishes, since crime must be atoned for, and the tool must be flung away as soon as its bloody work is done.

But to overcome the obstacles which oppose his seizure of the crown, Richard must be furnished with all those qualities which may make him a ruler of men, and confirm his superiority in a degenerate age. . . . Anyone who follows the action of Richard must become aware that he is the person of greatest spiritual force in his whole company, and that all those powers are at his disposal which, if they were directed to the accomplishing of a moral purpose, would qualify him for the highest achievements. It is this precisely which in the figure of Richard produces the dæmonic impression, viz., that those endowments, which are the necessary conditions of all great actions conducive to the development of humanity, are in him servants of the most fearful, most uncompromising egoism. A penetrative understanding, which sees through men and circumstances, an iron nerve which conflict only tempers to sterner power of endurance, a gift of utterance which can delude men and convert them into tools for his own purposes, finally, a death-defying courage—all these several qualities are amassed in

Richard to produce a unity which is appalling, inasmuch as they are perverted to a diabolic purpose. But it is precisely by virtue of these great endowments that Richard's personality is fitted to become that of the hero of a drama. The first aspect we have presented, whereby Richard appears as the instrument of the World-spirit, which has itself produced the wild conflict, and must bleed to death at last,—this gives us the *historical* point of view. The second point of view exhibits Richard's *personal* dæmonic greatness. If we conceive and realize the first aspect of his life and character, we see before us a historical personage, who can be judged only through study of a series of historical events. This elevates him at once above the level of ordinary reality. If we observe Richard from the second point of view, we obtain an individual portrait, which affects us in an appalling manner, because we perceive, appearing through moral distortion, the majestic features of humanity. But the psychological characteristics of Richard require to be explained no less than his historical significance. This leads us back to the causes which determined his awful course. Richard is deformed by nature, neglected, "cheated of feature," "scarce half made up." An outcast of nature, he believes that he may despise and dispense with the laws of nature. He is therefore from his birth at war with the laws of the moral order of the world, since these have binding power only upon those persons who have somewhat in common with them, and can be loved only by their equal. Thus wrath against Nature's injustice towards him makes Richard an enemy of every law, and every right, which has its roots in moral relations that repose on love as their principle. Richard's fiery, passionate nature feels that it is shut out from the realm of love, and excluded by unconquerable limits resulting from his misshapen person from this realm, he throws himself into the opposite passion of ambition, which allows him to consider all circumstances in relation to himself alone, and to appraise their value only as they afford sustenance to his private passion. Here he is "himself alone," needing no one to render his being complete, and using the universe only as a means to satisfy his vast egoism. This passion fills his whole soul, because it urges him to incessant energizing of all the forces of his nature, and so can lighten and relieve his fury against the laws of nature held sacred by other men. Richard, organized as he is, with the powerful urge which is upon him towards some great field for displaying his activity, towards a complete manifestation of the tremendous might of his mind, can only attain satisfaction through *destruction*; and as this can afford only an illusory satisfaction, he can never really attain for a moment to true and enduring content. The sense of desolation and solitude is therefore always the feeling which, even when not expressed in direct words, rises up in Richard's soul, as the miserable result of all his destructive activity, and even from the attainment of his ultimate object, the crown. . . . Richard, abiding in his own self, with his rage against the injustice of nature, can devote the energy of his intellect and will only to the realization of the abstract lordship of his own



*Ego.* Despotism is therefore the lonely summit on which after all the storms he alights, there, with the consciousness of his own terrible solitariness, to end his being.

H. TH. RÖTSCHER.—*Shakespeare in Seinen höchsten Charaktergebilden*,  
&c. (1864), pp. 32—35.

### INFLUENCE OF MARLOWE ON SHAKESPEARE'S "RICHARD III."

IN the second historical play which can be wholly ascribed to Shakespeare we still find the poetic or rhetorical quality for the next part in excess of the dramatic; but in *Richard III.* the bonds of rhyme at last are fairly broken. This only of all Shakespeare's plays belongs absolutely to the school of Marlowe. The influence of the elder master, and that influence alone, is perceptible from end to end. Here at last we can see that Shakespeare has decidedly chosen his side. It is as fiery in passion, as single in purpose, as rhetorical often, though never so inflated in expression, as *Tamburlaine* itself. It is doubtless a better piece of work than Marlowe ever did; I dare not say, than Marlowe ever could have done. It is not for any man to measure, above all it is not for any workman in the field of tragic poetry lightly to take on himself the responsibility or the authority to pronounce what it is that Christopher Marlowe could not have done; but dying as he did and when he did, it is certain that he has not left us a work so generally and so variously admirable as *Richard III.* As certain it is that but for him this play could never have been written. At a later date the subject would have been handled otherwise, had the poet chosen to handle it at all, and in his youth he could not have treated it as he has without the guidance and example of Marlowe. Not only are its highest qualities of energy, of exuberance, of pure and lofty style, of sonorous and successive harmonies, the very qualities that never fail to distinguish those first dramatic models which were fashioned by his ardent hand; the strenuous and single-handed grasp of character, the motion and action of combining and contending powers, which here for the first time we find sustained with equal and unfaltering vigour, throughout the length of a whole play, we perceive, though imperfectly, in the work of Marlowe before we can trace them as latent or infant forces in the work of Shakespeare.

A. C. SWINBURNE.—“*The Three Stages of Shakespeare*,”  
*The Fortnightly Review*, May 1, 1875, p. 631.

### SHAKESPEARE'S PLAY COMPARED WITH HOLINSLED'S HISTORY.

THE night previous to the battle was, according to the historian, terrible to Richard. "The fame went that he had a dreadful and terrible dream ; for it seemed to him, being asleep, that he did see divers images like terrible devils, which pulled and haled him, not suffering him to take any quiet or rest. The which strange vision not so suddenly strake his heart with a sudden fear, but it stuffed his head and troubled his mind with many busy and dreadful imaginations. . . . And lest that it might be suspected that he was abashed for fear of his enemies, and for that cause looked so piteously, he recited and declared to his familiar friends in the morning his wonderful vision and fearful dream." Such is the conduct of the dramatic tyrant.

" By the apostle Paul ! shadows to-night  
Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard  
Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers,  
Armed in proof, and led by shallow Richmond."

Shakespeare modified the "terrible devils" into "the souls of all that he had murdered." The starting of the affrighted tyrant from his couch was suggested by the narration of Sir Thomas More : after the murder of his nephews "he never had quiet in his mind, he never thought himself sure. . . . He took ill rest a' nights, lay long waking and musing, sore wearied with care and watch, rather slumbered than slept, troubled with fearful dreams, suddenly sometimes *start up, leap out of his bed and run about the chamber.*"

AUGUSTINE SKOTTOWE.—*The Life of Shakespeare*, Vol. I. pp. 201—202 (1824).

### COLLEY CIBBER'S "RICHARD III."

COLLEY CIBBER . . . was an important man in his day ; he was actor, play-writer, manager, adapter of Shakespeare, and afterwards poet-laureate. Cibber's version of *Richard III.* is still the Richard of the stage ; and from the mere fact of its vitality, apart from its obvious merits, his play demands notice almost above any similar production. The purport of this adaptation is to concentrate attention on Richard, by still further blackening his portrait, and by withdrawing lateral interests ; by striking off the wings of the story. Cibber produced a work excellently fitted for the stage, but at the loss of much that is grand in the original. Cibber's is an effective, but a coarse, play.

As Shakespeare wrote it, this is one of a series of historical dramas : closely connected with it are the three plays bearing the name of *King Henry VI.*, in the last of which the future King Richard bears an important part. Now as these were not then acting plays, Cibber took from them some fine speeches, in which Richard's character is carefully drawn, and the scene in which he murders the King in the Tower. That is utilization of waste material and pardonable where the principle of wide deviation from an acknowledged work of art is once allowed. So, also, the total omission of the Duke of Clarence, with his famous dream, is well judged. For stage effect his part is not only overweighted, considering the small figure he makes in this portion of the story, but, by its elaboration, is actually detrimental to a more important scene in the drama.

But the inherent vulgarity of the play, as revised, is shown by an interpolated passage in which Richard deliberately sets himself to kill his wife by neglect and cruelty. Equally commonplace and morbid is a scene in which we are brought to the very threshold of the chamber where the children are smothered, and there see Richard prowling about and moralizing on his wickedness. The language of the piece is a compound of Shakespeare and Cibber, curiously interlaced ; for, besides the omissions and interpolations, he habitually debases the poetry to his own standard of dulness. Impassioned ejaculations of grief and horror seemed profane when the stage had become a mere amusement, and were set aside. The glorious blank verse of the Elizabethan writers was then out of date ; its rhythm was not understood. The accented *ed*, for instance, in the verb and participle jarred on Cibber's sensitive ear, and he would always change a line to avoid it. . . . Again, recurring words in a line were inartistic. After that awful night on Bosworth Field, with the shades of his victims (and here Cibber has been at the pains to rewrite the vision, and has cut out the agony of remorse and the frenzied self-accusation at its close), when aroused to arms Richard exclaims—

“O Ratcliff ! I have dreamed a fearful dream,”

Cibber has it :—

“O Catesby, I have had such horrid dreams.”

Notice, too, that the crack rants in the part of Richard are Cibber's own invention. Such are—

“Off with his head ! So much for Buckingham.”

A tremendous hit on the stage. So again—

“Richmond, I say, come forth and singly face me,  
Richard is hoarse with daring thee to arms.”

And, lastly—

“ Hence babbling dreams, you threaten here in vain ;  
Conscience avaunt ! Richard’s himself again.”

Perhaps these time-honoured points tell as much in favour of Cibber’s version as its general practicability.

A. H. PAGET.—*Shakespeare’s Plays, A Chapter of Stage History* (1875), pp. 25—28.

### EDMUND KEAN’S RICHARD III.<sup>1</sup>

THE Richard of Shakespeare is towering and lofty ; equally impetuous and commanding ; haughty, violent, and subtle ; bold and treacherous ; confident in his strength as well as in his cunning ; raised high by his birth, and higher by his talents and his crimes ; a royal usurper, a princely hypocrite, a tyrant, and a murderer of the house of Plantagenet.

“ But I was born so high :  
Our aery buildeth in the cedar’s top,  
And dallies with the wind, and scorns the sun.”

The idea conveyed in these lines (which are indeed omitted in the miserable medley acted for *Richard III.*) is never lost sight of by Shakespeare, and should not be out of the actor’s mind for a moment. The restless and sanguinary Richard is not a man striving to be great, but to be greater than he is ; conscious of his strength of will, his power of intellect, his daring courage, his elevated station ; and making use of these advantages to commit unheard-of crimes, and to shield himself from remorse and infamy.

If Mr. Kean does not entirely succeed in concentrating all the lines of the character as drawn by Shakespeare, he gives an animation, vigour, and relief to the part which we have not seen equalled. He is more refined than Cooke ; more bold, more varied and original than Kemble in the same character. In some parts he is deficient in dignity, and, particularly in the scenes of state business, he has by no means an air of artificial authority. There is at times an aspiring elevation, an enthusiastic rapture in his expectations of attaining the crown, and at others a gloating expression of sullen delight, as if he already clenched the bauble, and held it in his grasp. The courtship scene with Lady Anne is an admirable exhibition of smooth and smiling villainy. The

<sup>1</sup> The part of Shakespeare’s *Richard III.* is perhaps more associated than any other of his characters with the memory of great actors, so

much so that it has been asserted by a recent German anti-Shakespearian critic—Benedix—that the actors alone have made the play popular.

progress of wily adulation, of encroaching humility, is finely marked by his action, voice, and eye. He seems, like the first Tempter, to approach his prey, secure of the event, and as if success had smoothed his way before him. The late Mr. Cooke's manner of representing this scene was more vehement, hurried, and full of anxious uncertainty. This, though more natural in general, was less in character in this particular instance. Richard should woo less as a lover than as an actor—to show his mental superiority, and power of making others the playthings of his purposes. Mr. Kean's attitude in leaning against the side of the stage before he comes forward to address Lady Anne, is one of the most graceful and striking ever witnessed on the stage. It would do for Titian to paint. The frequent and rapid transition of his voice from the expression of the fiercest passion to the most familiar tones of conversation was that which gave a peculiar grace of novelty to his acting on his first appearance. This has been since imitated and caricatured by others, and he himself uses the artifice more sparingly than he did. His bye-play is excellent. His manner of bidding his friends "Good-night," after pausing with the point of his sword, drawn slowly backward and forward on the ground, as if considering the plan of the battle next day, is a particularly happy and natural thought. He gives to the two last acts the greatest animation and effect. He fills every part of the stage, and makes up for the deficiency of his person by what has been sometimes objected to as an excess of action. The concluding scene in which he is killed by Richmond is the most brilliant of the whole. He fights at last like one drunk with wounds; and the attitude in which he stands with his hands stretched out, after his sword has been wrested from him, has a preternatural and terrific grandeur, as if his will could not be disarmed, and the very phantoms of his despair had power to kill.

W. HAZLITT.—*Characters of Shakspeare's Plays* (1818), pp. 228—230.

## KING JOHN.

## ACT III.

SCENE I. *The French KING's pavilion.*

*Enter* CONSTANCE, ARTHUR, and SALISBURY.

*Const.* Gone to be married ! gone to swear a peace !

False blood to false blood join'd ! gone to be friends !

Shall Lewis have Blanch, and Blanch those provinces ?

It is not so ; thou hast misspoke, misheard.

\* \* \* \*

Lewis marry Blanch ! O boy, then where art thou ?

France friend with England, what becomes of me ?

Fellow, begone : I cannot brook thy sight :

This news hath made thee a most ugly man.

*Sal.* What other harm have I, good lady, done,

But spoke the harm that is by others done ?

*Const.* Which harm within itself so heinous is As it makes harmful all that speak of it.

*Arth.* I do beseech you, madam, be content.

*Const.* If thou that bid'st me be content wert grim,

Ugly and slanderous to thy mother's womb,  
Full of displeasing blots and sightless stains,  
Lame, foolish, crooked, swart, prodigious,  
Patch'd with foul moles and eye-offending marks,  
I would not care, I then would be content,  
For then I should not love thee, no, nor thou  
Become thy great birth nor deserve a crown.  
But thou art fair, and at thy birth, dear boy,

Nature and Fortune join'd to make thee great :  
Of Nature's gifts thou mayst with lilies boast,  
And with the half-blown rose. But Fortune, O,  
She is corrupted, changed and won from thee ;  
She adulterates hourly with thine uncle John.

\* \* \* \*

Tell me, thou fellow, is not France forsworn ?  
Envenom him with words, or get thee gone  
And leave those woes alone which I alone  
Am bound to under-bear.

*Sal.* Pardon me, madam,  
I may not go without you to the kings.

*Const.* Thou mayst, thou shalt ; I will not go  
with thee :

I will instruct my sorrows to be proud ;  
For grief is proud and makes his owner stoop.  
To me and to the state of my great grief  
Let kings assemble ; for my grief's so great  
That no supporter but the huge firm earth  
Can hold it up : here I and sorrows sit ;  
Here is my throne, bid kings come bow to it.

[*Sits herself on the ground.*]

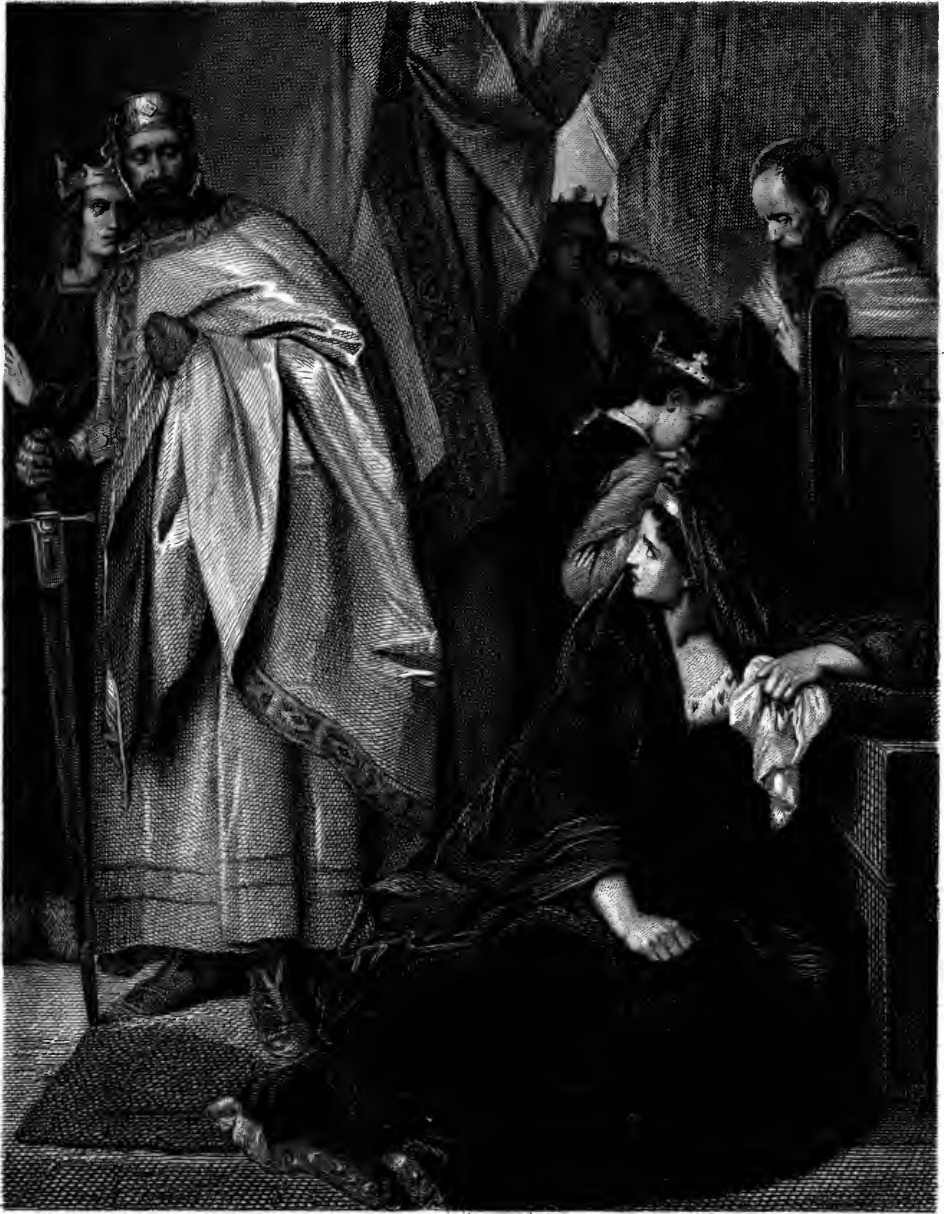
*Enter* KING JOHN, KING PHILIP, LEWIS,  
BLANCH, ELINOR, the BASTARD, AUSTRIA,  
and Attendants.

*K. Phi.* 'Tis true, fair daughter ; and this  
blessed day

Ever in France shall be kept festival :  
To solemnize this day the glorious sun  
Stays in his course and plays the alchemist,  
Turning with splendour of his precious eye  
The meagre cloddy earth to glittering gold :  
The yearly course that brings this day about  
Shall never see it but a holiday.

*Const.* A wicked day, and not a holy day !

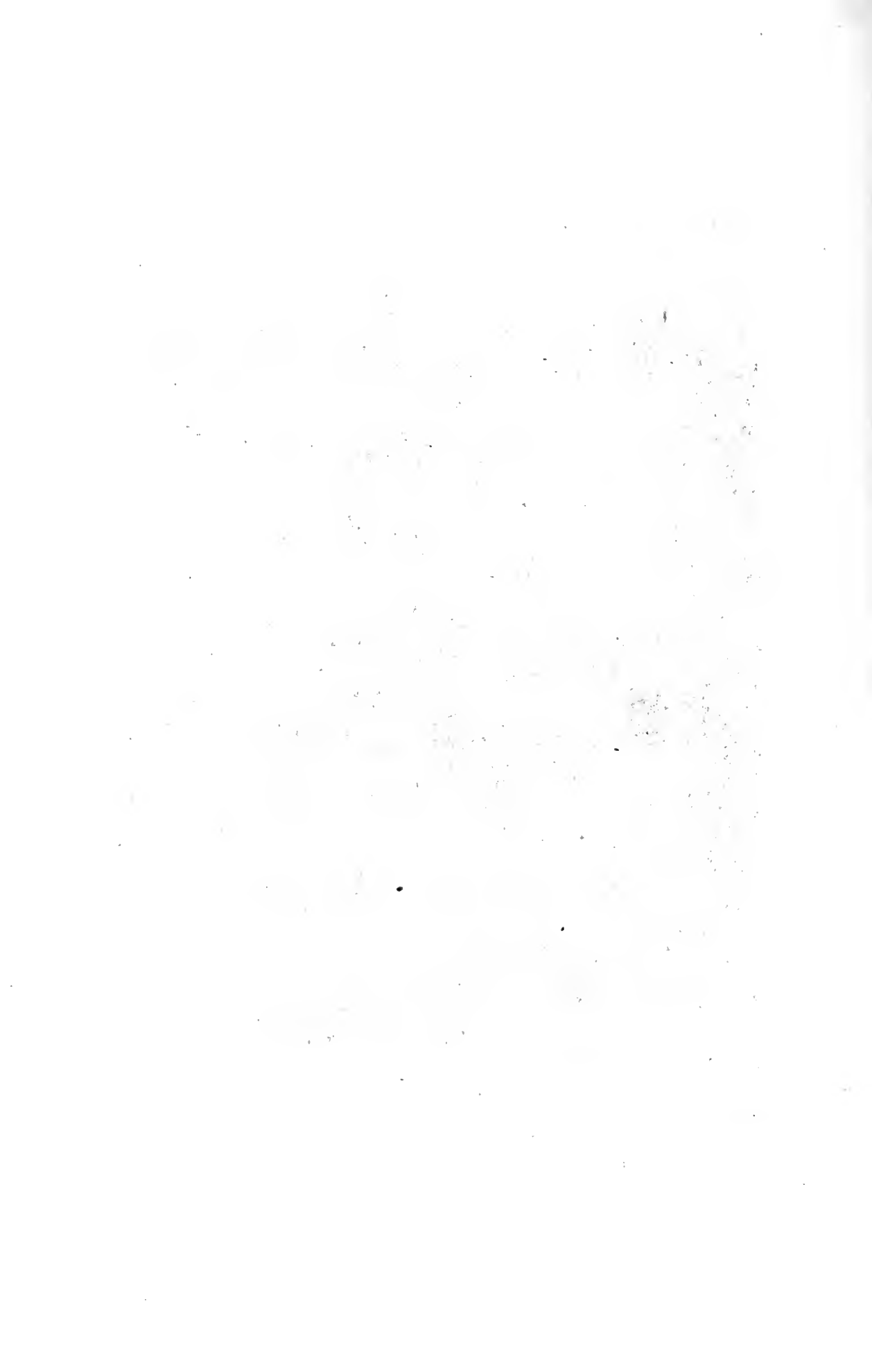
[*Rising.*]



*M. Adams del.*

*J. G. B. sculpsit.*

*König Johann — King John.*





## THE PLAY OF "KING JOHN."

SHAKESPEARE'S play of *King John* is the first in order of time of those "Chronicle Plays" which he gave to his country and the world with the title originally of "Histories." It gives a dramatic and imaginative view of an important reign in the annals of England; and the personages, events, and dates are subjected to the transmuting processes of a great poet's imagination, so as not only not to darken or distort historic truth, but to array it in a living light. We gain a deeper and more abiding sense of the truth by the help of that fine function of the poetic genius, by which the imagination gives unity and moral connection to events that stand apart and unrelated. "The history of our ancient kings,"—says Coleridge—"the events of their reigns I mean—are like stars in the sky: whatever the real interspaces may be, and however great they seem close to each other. The stars—the events—strike us, and remain in our eye, little modified by the difference of dates. A historic drama is, therefore, a collection of events borrowed from history, but connected together, in respect of cause and time, poetically, and by dramatic fiction." . . . .

The first scene of the tragedy of *King John* has that significancy which distinguishes the openings of Shakespeare's plays—an intimation of the whole plot, the full meaning of which is regularly developed in the progress of the drama. In almost the first words King John's royalty is spoken of as "borrowed majesty," and he is summoned by the embassy of his great contemporary, Philip Augustus of France, to yield his kingdom up to the rightful heir, Arthur Plantagenet, the son of his dead brother Geoffrey. The succession of John was usurpation, beginning in fraud and violence, and continued in crime; but of the previous Norman reigns four out of six of the Kings had possessed themselves of the sceptre by the law of the strong hand.

The tragedy begins with the voice of state, of diplomacy, of policy, and of the rivalry of England and France; and we shall see how, in the various characters, all the elements of mediæval life are present—the papacy and the priesthood—the monarchy and the nobility—the commonalty and the soldiery—all are there. It has, however, been ingeniously said by a German critic that "The hero of this piece stand not in the list of personages, and could not stand with them, for the idea should be clear without personification. The hero is England." This means, as I understand it, that Shakespeare has made England the great and ever-present idea of the play; that without any artifice of national vanity he has so written the history of the reign of King John as to inspire a deep and fervid spirit of nationality. It is comparatively an easy thing to animate the hearts of a people with such a spirit by presenting the *glorious* parts of their country's annals; the mere touch of the memory of victories won by their ancestors will kindle enthusiasm and pride in the breasts of posterity. We can understand how

the recollection, for example, of the splendid career of Edward III. should prompt the boast of the Britons of later times :—

“ We are all the sons of the men  
Who conquer'd on Cressy's plain ;  
And what our fathers did,  
Their sons can do again.”

But it was Shakespeare's arduous achievement to fire the sentiment of patriotism with the story of a reign that was tyrannical, oppressive, cowardly,—a period of usurpation and national degradation. He has accomplished this chiefly by means of one character, which is almost altogether a creation of his mind from very slight historical materials. The fertile imagination of the poet, and his genial exuberance of happy and gentle feelings, seem to have craved something more than the poverty of the history supplies ; he wanted somebody better than a king, better than a worldly ecclesiastic, and better than the bold but fickle barons. It is in the highest order of the dramatic art, and especially in the historic drama, that Shakespeare, on no other historical basis than the mere existence of a natural son of Richard, has created the splendid and most attractive character of Philip Falconbridge. Beside playing an important part himself, he fulfils something like the function of the chorus of the ancient drama ; for he seems to illustrate the purposes of the history and to make the real personages more intelligible. He is the embodiment, too, of the most genuine national feeling, and is truer to his country than king or noble. With an abounding and overflowing humour, a dauntless courage, and a gentleness of spirit that characterizes true heroism, Falconbridge carries a generous strength and a rude morality of his own, amid the craft and the cruelties and the feebleness of those who surround him. The character, imaginary as it is, has a historical value also in this, that it represents the bright side of feudal loyalty. Honoured by the King, Falconbridge never deserts him in his hour of need and peril, when the nobles are flying off from their allegiance and a foreign enemy is at hand. It is not servile flattery, but such genuine and generous loyalty that we look upon it as faithfulness to his country rather than adherence to the fortunes of the King. He is, as it were, the man of the people of the play, and we hear him prompting brave actions and a generous policy—encouraging the feeble King to a truer kingly career ; we see him withstanding the haughty barons, and still more indignant at papal aggression. He dwells in an atmosphere of heartlessness and villainy, but it pollutes him not ; rather does his presence partially purify it. It is remarkable that we do not, and cannot, I think, associate him injuriously with the character of King John, with whose fortunes he is identified, but from whose vices he is wholly aloof.

HENRY REED.—*Lectures on English History and Tragic Poetry as  
illustrated by Shakespeare* (1856), pp. 66—70.

## THE WOMEN OF THE HISTORICAL PLAYS.

LET us first look at the women of the Historical Plays. They of all persons are the least concerned with politics, and consequently they are those who approach nearest to the conditions of private life such as Shakespeare has represented in his comedies. They serve as a natural link between the poet's comic creations and his historical studies, and even in the midst of the great events which surround them they retain somewhat of the homeliness of *bourgeois* manners. In the events treated by the poet hardly any part is played by love. Therefore he wholly abandons the favourite theme of his comic pieces, which delineate with special fulness the emotions of tender hearts. The women whom he depicts are not lovers, happy or sad, but women whose destiny is already determined, who are bound by the engagements of their high rank, and the obligations of their birth, as much as by the ties of the domestic affections. They are nearly all queens and princesses who, in addition to the duties imposed upon them by royalty, have to fulfil those of wife and mother. In the absence of the passions of simple and untrammelled youth, there remain with them the tragic passions of maternal or of conjugal love.

To depict happiness is not the function of historical tragedy. The greater number of Shakespeare's heroines are unhappy, and it is their misfortune which brings out their beauty of character. One, like the Duchess of Gloucester in *Richard II.*, mourns for a murdered husband, and vainly seeks vengeance for his death; another, like Elizabeth in *Richard III.*, sees her husband die in the strength of his manhood, and survives her slaughtered sons. The Duchess of York throws herself at the feet of Henry IV. to implore pardon for her son, Aumerle, who has plotted against the King, and while she pours forth all the anguish of a mother's heart, she has the misery of hearing the father of the offender demand that he shall be condemned without remorse. Shakespeare excelled in painting these powerful situations, in which all the forces of the soul are strained to the utmost, in which the over-excited sensibility betrays itself in sobs or broken speech.

Young and old, the women of the historical dramas undergo all extremities of hardship. Doomed to live after having lost that which they love, they can neither comfort themselves, nor forget. They do not, like men, experience the joys of ambition and of military activity. Their elevated rank only exposes them to a more grievous fall, and whatever may be the issue of the civil strife, *they* must remain its most sorrowful victims.

Richard II. is hurled from his throne. With him falls the young wife, whom, in his days of prosperity, he had neglected, and who, notwithstanding, faithful to duty, has not ceased to love him. It is with despair that she hears of the King's abdication; she stations herself on his way as he is led to the Tower, vainly begs that she may share his prison; and after an embrace, cut short by the presence of Henry's officers, confesses that she is unable to endure this everlasting separation.

There are also women's eyes weeping for the death of the gallant Hotspur, slain in battle by the hand of Henry V. The northern champion leaves a widow who while he lived was gay and happy, but who hides herself, after this calamity, in a long obscurity of sorrow. And yet her grief is less cruel than that of Richard II.'s wife, for the memory of Percy's glory sheds over her life a bright illumination. It is not a husband disgraced and humiliated, fallen from his rank, and dishonoured by his own weakness, whom she has lost. He, whom she loved, died as he had lived in soldier fashion, his weapon in his hand. Over his dead body his enemies have shed tears, and the reverberation of his great deeds lasts for ever, as if to inspire Lady Percy with resignation worthy of such a memory.

When misfortune strikes the family, mothers suffer even more than wives; and Shakespeare comprehended all the agonies of maternal love. Of these he gave a faithful rendering in the part of Constance, Arthur's mother, and one of the chief *dramatis personæ* of *King John*. Constance is a widow, with one son, the legitimate heir to the English crown; but John, Arthur's uncle, has taken advantage of his youth to seize upon the throne, and the mother places her child under the protection of the French King, who has undertaken to maintain his rights. Philip Augustus declares war against the usurper, and the two hostile armies meet before the walls of Angiers. Until now, Constance has been sustained by the hope of regaining the position which she has lost. Unhappily political motives interfere with her designs. From the moment when they come to blows Philip and John perceive that it is for the interest of both parties to be at peace, that hardly any misfortunes are greater than those of war, and accordingly they are reconciled, and cement their new alliance by the marriage of Blanche of Castile, niece of the King of England, with the Dauphin, Lewis. Upon tidings of this reaching her, Constance loses all self-restraint. Her soul is a passionate one; she neither loves nor hates by halves, and she has devoted her life to the idea of regaining her son's throne. As happens with ardent natures, attached to some one hope which becomes the sole object of their thoughts, she cannot at first credit the treason of the French King. "It is not so," she exclaims to Salisbury, who is the first to announce the reconciliation of the kings—

"It is not so; thou hast misspoke, misheard;  
Be well advised—tell o'er thy tale again;  
It cannot be."

When she gazes upon Arthur she passes from incredulity to passionate tenderness, and to rage when she stands in the presence of Philip Augustus. She pours forth reproaches upon him, charging him with breach of faith, and with having deserted the cause of the oppressed.

For a moment she has reason to expect a return of happier fortune, and she grasps the hope with her habitual impetuosity of temper. A rupture takes place between the King of France and the King of England, consequent upon the intervention of the papal legate and his excommunication of John. Constance incites them to war, and has the satisfaction of seeing them armed one against the other. But this transient happiness is only the prelude to a new and more bitter trial. In the conflict which ensues between the two armies, the French are defeated, Arthur is taken prisoner, and carried off to England by his uncle. The wretched mother sees in a moment the horrible fate which awaits him, and, with the mournful prevision of maternal love, she divines that her son will never come forth alive from his prison. Then her wits begin to wander, and her over-excited sensibility causes her to speak now with an appearance of insanity, now, on the contrary, with the appalling logic of despair. When charged with being mad, she answers:—

“ I am not mad : I would to heaven I were !  
 For then 'tis like I should forget myself :  
 O, if I could, what grief should I forget.”

Then with a sudden access of emotion, which on the stage must be rendered by tears and sobs, she exclaims—

“ And, father cardinal, I have heard you say  
 That we shall see and know our friends in heaven :  
 If that be true, I shall see my boy again ;  
 For since the birth of Cain, the first male child,  
 To him that did but yesterday suspire,  
 There was not such a gracious creature born.”

. . . . But the most tragic female figure drawn by Shakespeare is that of Margaret of Anjou, widow of Henry VI., in the play of *Richard III.* This queen, formerly beautiful and powerful, has lost in succession all that bound her to life—her son the Prince of Wales, slain by the Yorkist leaders, her lover Suffolk, her husband, and her crown. She has misspent her season of prosperity, neglected her duty, insulted her vanquished enemies, stabbed the boy Rutland, and presented to the great Duke of York a napkin dyed with the blood of his son. A milder nature would accept misfortune as a punishment for past crimes, and would become resigned to it. Margaret knows nothing of such Christian sentiments, she regrets nothing that she has done ; she looks upon herself as a victim unjustly smitten ; she pursues with vengeance those who have been hostile to her, and lives only to be a witness of the ruin of her conquerors, and to rejoice in it. Although exiled under pain of death, she returns to England, to be a spectator of the intestine struggles of the House of York. Shakespeare personifies in her the classical Nemesis ; he gives her more than human proportions,

representing her as a kind of supernatural apparition. She penetrates without meeting opposition into the palace of Edward IV. ; she there exhales her hatred in presence of the members of the House of York and the courtiers. No one dreams of laying hands upon her, although she has been decreed to banishment ; and she passes forth, as she had entered, without encountering an obstacle. The same magic ring which on this first occasion threw open for her the doors of the royal dwelling, throws them open again when Edward IV. is dead, and his sons, by order of Richard III., have been murdered in the Tower. She came first to curse her enemies ; now she comes to gather up the fruits of her malediction. Like an avenging Fury, or the Fate of the ancients, she announces to each the doom which lies in store for him. . . .

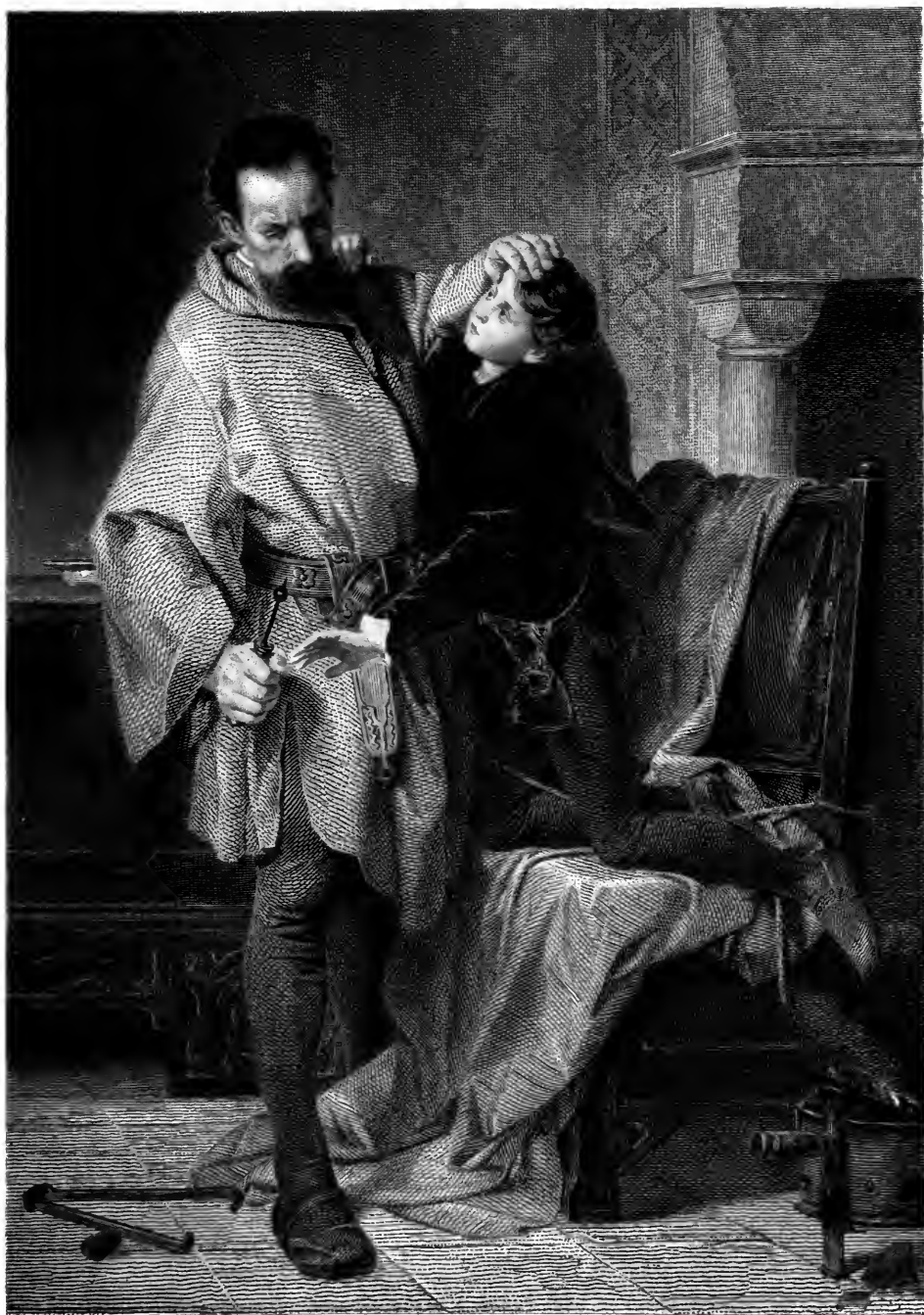
Shakespeare has thus made Margaret the personification of an idea rather than a human personality ; he has made it her part to represent the desire for vengeance, as it may seize upon a passionate nature, in a period of pitiless violence and strife. He animates her with the sanguinary spirit which too often inspired men in the Middle Ages, and which nowhere breaks forth with greater fury than in the Wars of the Roses.

If we had no knowledge of the date of the play of *Richard III.*, the conception of this modern Nemesis would be sufficient to incline us to believe that the piece was written in the poet's youth. In fact, it was written in 1593, immediately succeeding the last part of *Henry VI.*, and preceding the tetralogy of the House of Lancaster. When Shakespeare conceived it he was still under the influence of that group of plays which his predecessors (Kyd and Marlowe especially) devoted to the delineation of the passions of hatred and vengeance. If *Titus Andronicus* resembles the *Spanish Tragedy* and the *Jew of Malta*, it may also be asserted that reminiscences of these two pieces appear in *Richard III.*

The parts played by violent women are exceptional in the dramas of Shakespeare. He created them more and more rarely as he left behind him the conceptions of his youth. He preferred to depict, on the contrary, virtuous, noble, and pathetic natures. The most interesting of his heroines belongs to the latest of his historical plays—*Henry VIII.* Less known than certain romantic characters, than Ophelia, than Desdemona or Imogen, Catharine of Arragon perhaps does not possess that poetical grace which has made them popular ; but if the poet has not thrown over her person the veil of the ideal, if, finding her in actual history, he has left her as she actually was, he has fulfilled the obligation, under which he lay, of representing her with peculiar distinctness and vividness, discovering in her, as he does, a nobleness and dignity superior to any purely imaginary conceptions. We feel that she has truly lived, she speaks and acts like a woman who has undergone the trials and discipline of life, and what she loses on the poetical side, she gains by her likeness to the fairest types of actual, living humanity.

A. MEZIÈRES.—*Shakespeare, ses Œuvres et ses Critiques* (1865), pp. 133—142.





*Il ritorno del*

*F. Bonaldi sc.*

*Henry - Johann - Henry - Johann*



## KING JOHN.

## ACT IV.

SCENE I. *A Room in the Castle.*

HUBERT and ARTHUR.

*Hub.* Come, boy, prepare yourself.*Arth.* Is there no remedy?*Hub.* None, but to lose your eyes.*Arth.* O heaven, that there were but a mote  
in yours,A grain, a dust, a gnat, a wandering hair,  
Any annoyance in that precious sense!  
Then feeling what small things are boisterous  
there,

Your vile intent must needs seem horrible.

*Hub.* Is this your promise? go to, hold your  
tongue.*Arth.* Hubert, the utterance of a brace of  
tonguesMust needs want pleading for a pair of eyes:  
Let me not hold my tongue, let me not, Hubert:  
Or, Hubert, if you will, cut out my tongue,  
So I may keep mine eyes: O, spare mine eyes,  
Though to no use but still to look on you!  
Lo, by my troth, the instrument is cold  
And would not harm me.*Hub.* I can heat it, boy.*Arth.* No, in good sooth; the fire is dead  
with grief,Being create for comfort, to be used  
In undeserved extremes: see else yourself;  
There is no malice in this burning coal;The breath of heaven has blown his spirit out  
And strew'd repentant ashes on his head.*Hub.* But with my breath I can revive it,  
boy.*Arth.* An if you do, you will but make it  
blushAnd glow with shame at your proceedings,  
Hubert:Nay, it perchance will sparkle in your eyes;  
And like a dog that is compell'd to fight,  
Snatch at his master that doth tarre him on.  
All things that you should use to do me wrong  
Deny their office: only you do lack  
That mercy which fierce fire and iron extends,  
Creatures of note for mercy-lacking uses.*Hub.* Well, see to live; I will not touch thine  
eyeFor all the treasure that thine uncle owes:  
Yet am I sworn and I did purpose, boy,  
With this same very iron to burn them out.*Arth.* O, now you look like Hubert! all this  
while

You were disguised.

*Hub.* Peace: no more. Adieu.Your uncle must not know but you are dead;  
I'll fill these dogged spies with false reports:  
And, pretty child, sleep doubtless and secure,  
That Hubert, for the wealth of all the world,  
Will not offend thee.*Arth.* O heaven! I thank you, Hubert.*Hub.* Silence; no more: go closely in with  
me:

Much danger do I undergo for thee.

SHAKESPEARE'S "KING JOHN" NOT TRUE TO THE FACTS OF  
HISTORY.

IN choosing the reign of John Lackland as the subject of a tragedy, Shakespeare was unable to follow with scrupulous fidelity the facts of history. A reign in which, as Hume has said, England was baffled and humiliated in all her enterprizes, could not be represented with entire truth before an English public and an English court; and the sole memorial of John which the nation should have prized, the great Charter, was not a matter which would naturally interest in a high degree such a queen as Elizabeth. Accordingly Shakespeare's play presents no more than a summary of the last years of that shameful reign; and the poet's skill is employed in

veiling the character of his chief personage, without disfiguring it, and in disguising the colour of events without denaturalizing them. The only particular with respect to which Shakespeare definitely decided to substitute an invention for the facts is the relation of King John to France; and assuredly all the illusions of national vanity were needed to enable Shakespeare to present, and English spectators to accept the spectacle of Philip Augustus succumbing under the superior might of John Lackland. It is in this way that the facts might have been put for the gratification of John himself, when shut up in Rouen. While Philip was seizing upon his French possessions, he said, "Let the French go on; I will recover in a day what they spend years in winning." Everything in Shakespeare's play which has reference to the war with France, might seem as if it were invented to justify this extravagant boast of the cowardliest and most insolent of kings.

In the other parts of the drama, the action itself, and what is indicated by facts which it was not possible to conceal, suffice to give an imperfect view of John's character, into which the poet did not dare to penetrate, and into which he could not penetrate without disgust; but neither was such a personage, nor this manner of portraying him with reservations, capable of producing a great dramatic effect; therefore Shakespeare has made the interest of the piece turn upon the fate of young Arthur; therefore he has entrusted to Falconbridge that original and brilliant part, in which he evidently took a personal pleasure, and which he hardly ever fails to introduce where it is possible.

Shakespeare represents the young Duke of Brittany as having reached that age at which for the first time his rights could be asserted after Richard's death, that is, about twelve years. It is known that Arthur was twenty-five or twenty-six years of age, that he was already married, and attractive through his brilliant and generous endowments, when he became prisoner of his uncle; but the poet felt how much more interesting in the case of a child was this spectacle of weakness in the grasp of cruelty; besides, if Arthur had not been a child, his mother could not have been put forward in so prominent a position; in suppressing the part of Constance, Shakespeare would perhaps have deprived us of the most pathetic painting of a mother's love ever conceived; and few emotions were more profoundly entered into by Shakespeare than the maternal passion.

At the same time that he has rendered the fact more touching, he has rendered it less horrible by diminishing the atrocity of the crime. The most generally received opinion is that Hubert de Burgh, who undertook to destroy Arthur only with a view of saving him, having balked his uncle's cruelty by means of false reports and by a mock burial, John, who received information of the true state of the case, first removed Arthur from the Castle of Falaise, where he was in the custody of Hubert, and then himself repaired at night and by water to Rouen, where he had caused Arthur to be immured, brought the young Duke on board his vessel, stabbed him with his own hand, tied a stone to his body, and flung it into the river. We can understand how a true poet would avoid such

a picture. Apart from the necessity of absolving his leading character from so odious a crime, Shakespeare understood how much more dramatic and in accordance with the common nature of man was the cowardly remorse of John when he perceived the danger which the report of his nephew's death had drawn upon him, than this excess of brutal ferocity; and certainly the fine scene in which John converses with Hubert after the withdrawal of his nobles, is sufficient to justify such a choice. Moreover, the picture which Shakespeare presents so intensely possessed his imagination, and acquired in his eyes so vivid a reality that he could not but feel how, after the incomparable scene in which Arthur wins over Hubert, it would be impossible to endure the idea that any human being should lay hands on the poor child, and subject him anew to the torturing anguish from which he had escaped. The poet knew further that the spectacle of Arthur's death, although less cruel, would yet be intolerable if in the minds of the spectators it were accompanied by the agony which the thought of the suffering of Constance would add to it; he therefore is careful to apprise us of the mother's death before we are made witnesses of the death of the child; as though, when his imagination had up to a certain point entered into the pangs of a passionate heart, his too tender soul took alarm, and endeavoured for its own sake to soften and assuage them. Whatever misery Shakespeare represents, he almost always hints to us some yet greater misery from which he draws back, and which he spares us.

GUIZOT.—*Shakespeare et son Temps* (ed. 1852), pp. 347—352.

### CHILDREN IN THE PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE.

A READER who has not consciously brought them together from sundry places is hardly aware of the existence of this population of little people, who move to and fro, or gleam past for a moment and then disappear, leaving a regret for gladness lost, in the world of Shakespeare's imagination. The poet can hardly be said to have studied the nature of children for its own sake, with loving care such as we recognise in the writings of George Eliot. We get from Shakespeare no Eppie, no Tottie Poyser, no Maggie or Tom Tulliver; more often the childish voices are heard—and rightly heard—as parts in complex harmonies, involved amid the larger forces of the dramas. Yet while it is true that these children of Shakespeare are brought into being less for their own sakes than to minister in some way to the more important personages or to the total impression of the work, the sleepless dramatic instinct of the poet will not allow him even here to disregard diversities of character; and of the sixteen boys and girls who form this little population, almost every one is a complete human being. The gentle and passive Arthur of *King John*, superior by virtue of his freedom from greeds and frauds to the adult persons of

the play, resembles as little as possible the gallant Edward of *Henry VI.*, dealing out quick, vindictive speeches, unterrified by a circle of cruel York faces, until he falls under the daggers :—

“ O brave young prince ! thy famous grandfather  
Doth live again in thee.”

In *Richard III.* the orphaned children of Clarence are introduced chiefly to add their parts to the terzet of lamentation in the lyrical scene of the afflicted women—tears and cries of three generations mingling together. But the murdered princes of the Tower are sharply-cut and contrasted figures—Edward, the dignified, earnest, clear-seeing boy, and his quick-tongued, malapert brother, the pretty rogue, Richard. Young Marcius is a Roman child, and child of Coriolanus—“o’ my word the father’s son”—mammocking, in a Coriolanus mood, the gilded butterfly, and afterwards for a brief period appearing, led by the majestic Volumnia, to overwhelm and break his father’s heart with the sudden swell of paternal pride and hope. Then, in the group made up of pages, there is Lucius, struggling dutifully against a boy’s tyrannous need of sleep, that he may soothe with music his master, the conspirator who has struck Cæsar but cannot wake a sleeping child; there is the *gamin* of over-civilised and over-sensualised Athens in *Timon*; there is the tiny humorist Moth, who mocks so airily his master’s absurdity; and yet again there is Sir John’s page Robin, the mannikin whom, for the fun of the contrast, Prince Hal has set to walk behind the fat knight, and whom, after loving him through three plays, Shakespeare does to death in *Henry V.*, when the dastard French at Agincourt “kill the poys and the luggage.” May we not suppose that, amid fiercer purposes, a remembrance of his pet boy mingled with Henry’s passion when the rage of battle flamed, and he ordered the throats of the prisoners to be cut? William Page, who in the presence of blameless matrons stumbles on the unlucky genitive case (“vengeance of Jenny’s case!”), is a correct little British Philistine; while in Mamilius of *The Winter’s Tale*, whose own solemnly-begun winter’s tale, “There was a man——” is never concluded, we discover the women’s favourite, spoilt darling of court ladies, the “Muttersöhnchen.” Last, in the preternaturally wise son of Macduff we witness the premature and sad effort to find place among a boy’s thoughts for the conceptions of traitor, of tyrant, and of murderer, which will hardly be thought, yet which are in fact but too near and real.

EDWARD DOWDEN.—*The Academy*, July 24, 1875 (founded upon *Shakespeare’s Kindergestalten*, by Julius Thümmel, in *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*, vol. x., 1875).

THE HISTORICAL PLAYS NOT WRITTEN WITH A  
SYSTEMATIC DESIGN.

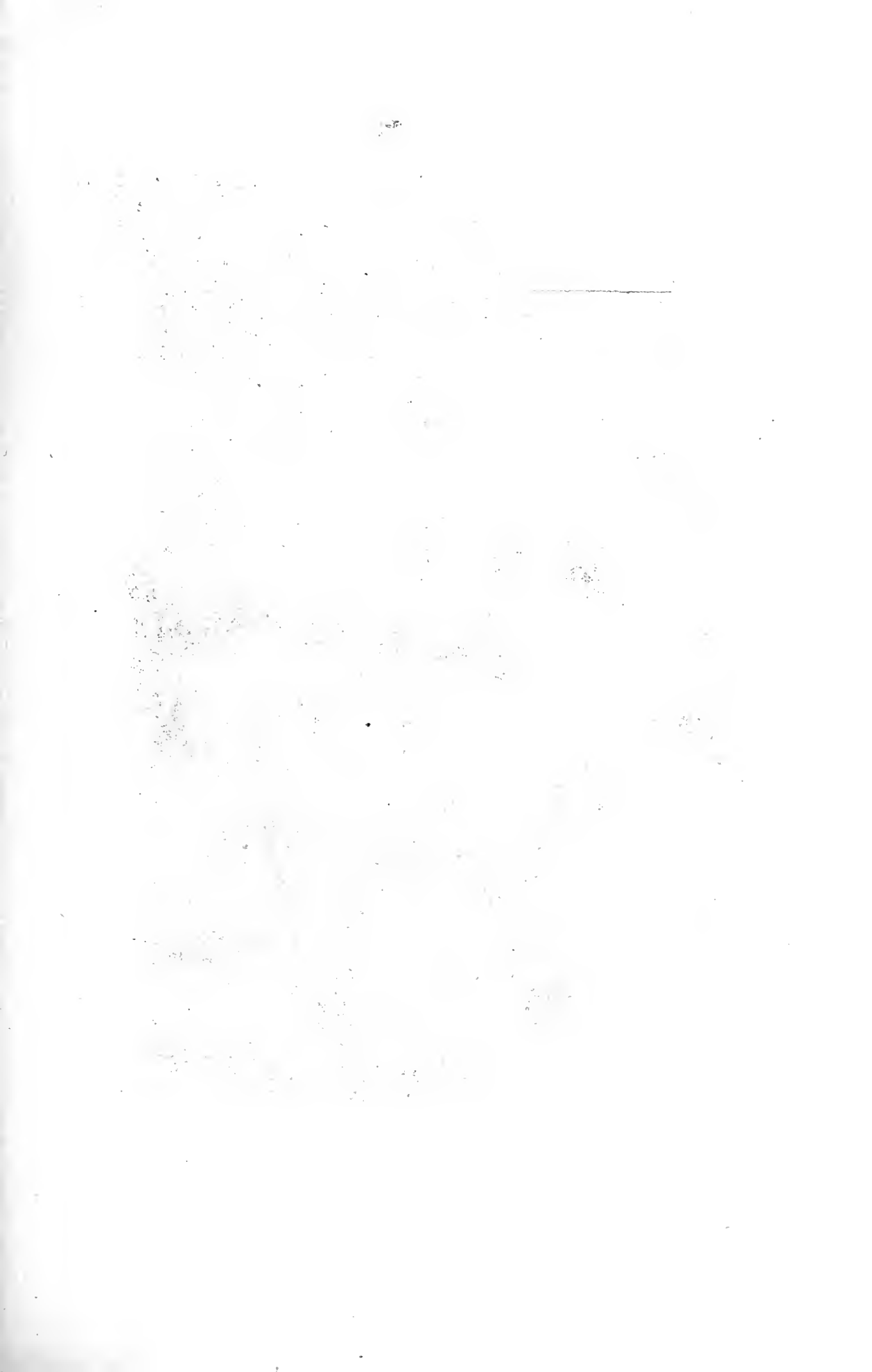
SHAKESPEARE'S historical plays are often discoursed about as if they were a projected series of interdependent works, written in pursuance of a plan, the purpose of which was to illustrate English History. That they illustrate history, and in a certain sense were meant to do so, is manifest upon their very face ; but that they do this in conformity with a systematic design, there is neither external nor internal evidence to show. The origin of a contrary opinion must be traced to a tradition first mentioned by Gildon, according to which Shakespeare told Ben Jonson that "finding the nation generally very ignorant of history, he wrote plays in order to instruct the people in that particular." But of all the unfounded stories told of Shakespeare, this is the most difficult of belief. Such a declaration could not have been made by one of those men to the other, with a grave face, actors though they were. For Historical Plays, or Histories, as they were called, were in vogue with our ancestors before Shakespeare began to write for the stage ; and so far was he from seeking to impart historical truth to the audiences at Blackfriars, that he did not even attempt to correct the grossest violations of historical truth in the older play upon which he founded one of his histories—this very *King John* ; and in other instances, in which he went for his story directly to the Chronicles, he did not hesitate to bring together events really separated by years (though connected as cause and effect, or means to a common end), when, by so grouping them, he could produce a vivid and impressive dramatic picture of the period which he undertook to represent.

In writing the Histories he had the same purpose as in writing the Comedies and Tragedies ; that purpose being always to make a good play : and with him a good play was one which would fill the theatre whenever it was performed, and at the same time give utterance to his teeming brain, and satisfy his dramatic intuition. He wrote Histories because they suited the taste of the day ; and in their composition,—no less and no more than in that of Comedies and Tragedies—he used, as the basis of his work, the materials nearest at hand and best suited to his purpose. . . .

The Wars of the Roses and the events which led to them offered him a succession of stirring scenes filled with famous actors which could be worked into dramatico-historical pictures of the reigns of the monarchs under whom they took place, and which would appeal directly to the love of knowledge, the chivalric sympathies, and the patriotism that animated the audiences for which he wrote. The bloody struggle that began with the deposition of one Richard at Westminster, and ended with the death of another at Bosworth Field, its long succession of internecine horrors relieved only by the glorious episode of Agincourt, had for our ancestors in Shakespeare's time the charm of fable

united to the sober interest of history. The nearest events were so remote that their harsh features were mellowing by distance, and their sharp outlines crumbling into the picturesqueness of antiquity while those of earliest occurrence were yet sufficiently near to be familiar objects of contemplation, preserved from oblivion as they were in the traditions of men removed only by a few generations from the actors who took part in them. To this interest in the subject—an interest to the audience intrinsic, to the dramatist extrinsic—and not to historical plan or instructive purpose of any kind, we owe the series of plays beginning with *Richard II.* and ending with *Richard III.* The epic of our race became a drama: our Homer sang upon the stage; and Virgil recited to the people.

RICHARD GRANT WHITE.—*The Works of Shakespeare*, vol. vi. pp. 7—8 (ed. 1872).





W. G. Woodcut by J. G. Kneller del.

J. G. Kneller del.

Act IV. Scene I. Shylock, Antonio, Portia, and the Merchant of Venice.



THE  
MERCHANT OF VENICE.

## ACT II.

SCENE V. *Before SHYLOCK'S house.**Enter SHYLOCK and LAUNCELOT.*

*Shy.* Well, thou shalt see, thy eyes shall be  
thy judge,

The difference of old Shylock and Bassanio :—  
What, Jessica !—thou shalt not gormandise,  
As thou hast done with me :—What, Jessica !—  
And sleep and snore, and rend apparel out :—  
Why, Jessica, I say !

*Laun.* Why, Jessica !

*Shy.* Who bids thee call? I do not bid thee  
call.

*Laun.* Your worship was wont to tell me that  
I could do nothing without bidding.

*Enter JESSICA.*

*Jes.* Call you? what is your will?

*Shy.* I am bid forth to supper, Jessica.  
There are my keys. But wherefore should I go?  
I am not bid for love: they flatter me:  
But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon  
The prodigal Christian. Jessica, my girl,  
Look to my house. I am right loth to go:

There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,  
For I did dream of money-bags to-night.

*Laun.* I beseech you, sir, go: my young  
master doth expect your reproach.

*Shy.* So do I his.

*Laun.* An they have conspired together; I  
will not say you shall see a masque; but if you  
do, then it was not for nothing that my nose fell  
a-bleeding on Black-Monday last at six o'clock i'  
the morning, falling out that year on Ash-Wed-  
nesday was four year, in the afternoon.

*Shy.* What, are there masques? Hear you  
me, Jessica:

Lock up my doors; and when you hear the drum  
And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd fife,  
Clamber not you up to the casements then,  
Nor thrust your head into the public street  
To gaze on Christian fools with varnish'd faces,  
But stop my house's ears, I mean my casements:  
Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter  
My sober house. By Jacob's staff, I swear,  
I have no mind of feasting forth to-night:  
But I will go. Go you before me, sirrah;  
Say I will come.

*Laun.* I will go before, sir. Mistress, look  
out at window, for all this;

There will come a Christian by,  
Will be worth a Jewess' eye. [*Exit.*]

## SHYLOCK, JESSICA, AND PORTIA.

WHEN I saw this piece represented at Drury Lane there stood behind me in the box a beautiful, pale-faced Englishwoman, who, at the end of the Fourth Act wept passionately and exclaimed repeatedly, *The poor man is wronged!* Her face was one of the noblest Greek type, and her eyes were large and black: I have never been able to forget them—those great black eyes that wept for Shylock!

When I think of those tears I must needs count the *Merchant of Venice* among the tragedies, although the framework of the piece is adorned with the mirthfullest masks, figures of satyrs, and little loves, and although the poet expressly designed to produce a comedy. Shakespeare, it may be, fondly purposed for the gratification of the common crowd to exhibit a baited Werwolf, a hateful and fabulous monster, who pants for blood,

thereby forfeiting his daughter and his ducats, and earning derision and mockery to boot. But the Genius of the poet, the world-spirit, which rules within him, is ever more powerful than his private and personal will, and thus it came to pass that in Shylock, in spite of the glaring caricature-mask, Shakespeare put forth the justification of an unhappy sect, which for secret causes, and in the purpose of Providence has borne the burden of the hatred of high and low, and which has not been disposed always to return this hatred with love. . . . .

Truly, with the exception of Portia, Shylock is the most respectable person in the entire piece. He loves gold, he does not dissemble this love, he cries it aloud in the marketplace. But there is a thing on which he sets a higher value than on gold,—namely, satisfaction for his outraged heart, the just recompense for unutterable despite and contumely; although he is offered ten times the amount of the borrowed money, he rejects it, and the three thousand, or ten times three thousand ducats do not cause him a regret if the sum will purchase a pound of the flesh of his enemy's heart. . . . . No! Shylock indeed loves his gold, but there are things which he loves much more, and among other things, his daughter, "Jessica, my girl." Although in the extremity of his rage he curses her, and would fain see her lying dead at his feet with the jewels in her ears, and the ducats in the coffin, he loves her all the while more than all ducats and jewels. Driven back from public life, and from the Christian society into the narrow inclosure of domestic happiness, there remain for the poor Jew only the feelings of the family, and these emerge in his case with the most tender fervency. The turquoise, the ring which his wife, his Leah, had once given him, he would not have parted with "for a wilderness of monkeys." When in the trial scene Bassanio speaks :

" Antonio, I am married to a wife  
Which is as dear to me as life itself ;  
But life itself, my wife, and all the world  
Are not with me esteemed above thy life :  
I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all  
Here to this devil, to deliver you."

And when Gratiano adds,

" I have a wife whom I protest, I love :  
I would she were in heaven, so she could  
Entreat some power to change this currish Jew"—

then anguish rises in Shylock's breast for the fate of his daughter, who has married among men who could offer up their wives for their friends, and not aloud, but "aside," he mutters to himself,

" These be the Christian husbands ; I have a daughter,  
Would any of the stock of Barrabas  
Had been her husband rather than a Christian."

This utterance, this passing word is the ground for a judgment of condemnation, which we are obliged to pass upon the fair Jessica. It was no loveless father whom she abandoned, whom she robbed, whom she betrayed. Shameful treachery! Nay, she makes common cause with Shylock's enemies, and when these at Belmont utter all manner of evil speeches against him, Jessica does not cast down her eyes, Jessica's lips do not grow white, but Jessica utters the foulest reproach against her father. Horrible outrage! She possesses no character save a wandering desire. She grew weary in the strong, straitly-closed, "sober" house of the bitter-spirited Jew, until at length it seemed to her a hell. The frivolous heart was all too readily enticed by the gay tones of the drum and the "wry-necked fife." Did Shakespeare mean in all this to picture a Jewess? Assuredly, no; he paints only a daughter of Eve, one of those beautiful birds, who when fledged, flutter forth from the paternal nest to the favourite male songster. In like manner Desdemona followed the Moor, in like manner Imogen followed Posthumus. Such is the feminine usage. With Jessica a certain timid modesty is especially observable, which she cannot overmaster, when she must assume her boyish attire. Perhaps in this trait one may recognize that peculiar bashfulness which is proper to her tribe, and which lends to its daughters such an inexpressible charm. This Jewish modesty, it may be, is the result of an opposition which the Jews maintained from ancient times against that oriental service of the senses and of sensuality, which formerly appeared in the most exuberant blossoming among their neighbours, the Egyptians, Phoenicians, Assyrians, and Babylonians, and which in perpetual transformation has continued to exist until the present day.

If we look on Shylock as the representative, studied from an unfavourable point of view, of the rigid, earnest, art-hating Judea, then Portia will stand before us as the representative of that second blossoming of the Greek spirit, which from Italy in the sixteenth century shed over the world its delicious odour, and which at the present day we love and treasure under the name of the "Renaissance." Portia is likewise the representative of a happier fate in opposition to the destiny of gloom, which is represented by Shylock. How bloomful, how roseate, how clearly harmonious are all her thoughts and utterances; how warm with a spirit of joy her words are, how beautiful is all her imagery, most of which is borrowed from mythology. How sad, on the other hand, how narrowing and constraining, how repulsive are the thoughts and speeches of Shylock, who on the contrary uses only comparisons from the Old Testament. His wit is sardonic and corrosive, he seeks his metaphors from among the most offensive objects, and accordingly his words become crowded discords, shrill, hissing, and grating. As are the persons, so are their places of abode. We see how the servant of Jehovah will not suffer in his "sober house" any graven image, or likeness of God or of man who is made in the image of God; how

he stops the ears of his dwelling-place, its windows, lest the tones of heathenish mummery might penetrate into this "sober house;" and over against this we see the magnificent and tasteful *Villeggiatura* life in the noble palace at Belmont, where are clear light and music, and where, among paintings, marble statues, and tall laurel trees, the wooers in festive attire promenade to and fro, musing upon the riddles of love, and in the midst of all this splendour, Signora Portia, like a goddess, gleams forth, "her sunny hair around her forehead flowing." Through such a contrast the two chief persons of the drama become so individualized, that one might take his oath that they are not figures of a poet's fancy, but actual mortals born of woman. Nay, they seem to us more truly alive than the ordinary creations of nature, for neither time nor death can lay hold upon them, and in their veins pulses that ever-living blood, immortal poetry. If you come to Venice, and wander through the Ducal Palace, you know well that neither in the Hall of Senators nor on the Giants' Stairs will you meet with Marino Faliero; old Dandolo you may recall to mind in the Arsenal, but in none of the Golden Gallies will you look for the blind hero; you will see at a corner of the Via Santa a serpent carven in stone, and at the other angle the winged lion, holding in his paws the serpent's head, and there is haply present to your thought, and yet only for a minute, the proud Carmagnola. But far more than of such historical persons, you will think at Venice of Shakespeare's Shylock, who lives now and for ever, while these have long mouldered in their graves—and when you move up the Rialto, your eye will seek him in every direction, you will surmise that he must be discoverable there behind a pillar with his Jewish gaberdine, and his suspicious calculating countenance, and believe many a time that you hear his strident voice—"Three thousand ducats—well!"

I at least, a wandering chaser of dreams as I am, looked everywhere along the Rialto if perchance I might there find Shylock. I should have had something to tell him which would have given him pleasure, that, for example, his cousin, Mr. Von Shylock of Paris had become the mightiest Baron of Christendom, and had received from her Catholic Majesty that Order of Isabella, which was instituted long ago to celebrate the expulsion of the Jews and the Moors from Spain. But nowhere upon the Rialto did I observe him, and then I resolved to seek my old acquaintance in the Synagogue. The Jews celebrate here their holy day of reconciliation, and stand wrapped in their white robes, with uncanny swayings of the head, almost looking like a company of spectres. There stand the poor Jews, fasting and praying from earliest morning, having taken neither meat nor drink since the evening before, and having previously asked pardon of all their acquaintances for whatsoever injuries they may have caused them in the course of the year, that in like manner God may pardon them their sins—a noble custom which strangely exists among this people, to whom notwithstanding the teaching of Christ has remained wholly alien.

Peering round to find old Shylock, while I carefully reviewed all the white, suffering Jewish faces, I made a discovery, about which unhappily I cannot remain silent. I had visited on the same day the madhouse of San Carlo, and now in the synagogue, it struck and startled me, that in the gaze of the Jews, the same fatal half staring, half unsteady, half cunning, half shy gleam was flickering, which a short time previously I had noticed in the eyes of the insane at San Carlo. This indescribable, mysterious gaze was produced not specially by an absence of intelligence, but far more by the dominant power of a fixed idea. Has the faith in that God of thunder, out of and above the world, who spoke to Moses, become the fixed idea of an entire people?—then, although for two thousand years men have confined that people in the strait-waistcoat and played upon it with the cold douche, it will not abandon its idea,—like that insane advocate whom I saw in San Carlo, who would not let himself be talked out of his belief that the sun is an English cheese, that its rays consist of bright red worms, and that such a descending worm-ray was feeding upon his brain.

I desire here in no degree to contest the value of that fixed idea, but shall only say that those who bear it are too weak to master it, and therefore are borne down by it and become hopelessly incurable. What a martyrdom for the sake of this fixed idea have they not already been willing to endure! what greater martyrdom stands yet before them! I shudder at this thought, and a ceaseless pity trickles through my heart. During the entire Middle Ages, and onward to the present day, has not the dominant conception of life been in direct opposition to that idea which Moses laid as a burden upon the Jews, which he buckled on their shoulders with sacred straps, which he cut in their very flesh? for in truth they do not differ from Christians and Mohammedans in their essential nature, nor through some contradictory synthesis, but only through an interpretation and a shibboleth. But if once Satan conquers, that sinful Pantheism, from which may all saints of the Old and the New Testament and of the Koran preserve us! there will follow a tempest of persecution on the heads of the poor Jews, which will far surpass all their former afflictions.

Though I peered about in the synagogue at Venice, nowhere could I behold the countenance of Shylock. And yet it seemed to me, as though he kept himself concealed there behind one of the white robes, praying fervently like his other companions in the faith, with stormy fierceness, with frenzy praying upwards to the throne of Jehovah, the austere God and King. I saw him not. But towards evening when according to the belief of the Jews the doors of heaven are shut, and no additional prayer may find entrance, I heard a voice, through which tears dropped as they have never been wept by the eyes of men. It was a sobbing that might move a stone to pity. It was a sound of distress which could only come from a bosom that held shut up within itself all the martyrdom borne by a whole afflicted people through eighteen centuries. It was the

death-rattle of a soul which drops down weary to death before the gates of heaven. And this voice seemed to me well known, and it seemed to me that I had heard it in past time, when full of despair it moaned forth "Jessica, my girl."

HEINRICH HEINE.—*Shakspeare's Mädchen und Frauen; Jessica: Portia.*

### HOW GERMAN CRITICS ATTEMPT TO FIND A CENTRAL IDEA IN A PLAY.

It might be supposed that critics would long since have come to a unanimous and generally recognized æsthetic estimate of such a much-read play as the *Merchant of Venice*, standing as it does on the *répertoire* of almost every stage; however, the conceptions of the fundamental idea, the opinions concerning the composition, and the criticisms of the characters differ here more widely than in the case of most of the other works of our poet. Each reader enjoys and admires the splendid poetry, but each one understands and interprets it in his own way. This unquestionably shows how right Gervinus is, in finding a proof of the wealth and the many-sidedness of Shakespeare's works to lie in the variety of the points of view from which they may be regarded, as it is not without a certain degree and appearance of correctness that several opinions on one and the same play may be formed. According to Horn, *The Merchant of Venice*, is based upon a "truly grand, profound, extremely delightful, nay an almost blessed idea, upon a purely Christian, conciliatory love, and upon mediating mercy as opposed to the law, and to what is called right." Ulrici's finds the ideal unity in the saying, *Summum jus summa injuria*, and Rötischer modifies this view in so far that he considers the innermost spirit of the play evidently to be the dialectics of abstract right. He goes on to say: "By the expression, dialectics of abstract right, we mean, that development by which abstract right by itself, that is, by its own nature, discovers its own worthlessness, consequently destroys itself where it seeks to govern human life and to assert itself as an absolute power. Abstract right is the right of the letter, the rigid expression of the law which endeavours to assert itself as the sole power, to the exclusion of all other elements of life, and thereby becomes the greatest wrong to the moral mind." In opposition to these three closely allied conceptions, according to which the centre of gravity of the play lies in Portia's address to Mercy, Gervinus maintains that in the *Merchant of Venice* the poet wished to delineate man's relation to property. He says, "to prove man's relation to property, to money, is to weigh his inner value by a most subtle balance, and to separate that which clings to unessential and external things from that which in its inner nature places itself in relation to a higher destiny." He thinks that according to Shake-

speare, money, the god of the world, is the symbol of appearance and of everything external. To this Hebler, while also believing the fundamental idea of the piece to lie in the struggle against appearance, adds, that it is, however, by no means only represented symbolically, but in a very plastic and classical manner. The caskets, according to him, are symbols of appearance in general, and especially of that appearance which envelops human worth and worthlessness. The true nature which lies hidden beneath appearances is in the end everywhere victorious. According to this conception, Bassanio's speech, when selecting the casket, contains the key to the poem, and it cannot be denied that it possesses as great a claim to this distinction as Portia's apotheosis of Mercy. Kreyssig, lastly, admits the impossibility of comprising the numerous diverse and to some extent opposite elements of the play under one fundamental idea. He shows that in Shakespeare's lighter dramas the most heterogeneous elements contribute towards the effect of unity, and that it is important to recognize the common law in the various contrasting phenomena, but not to construct this law out of a single symptom. According to him, we should have to choose a higher and freer stand-point than that of a moral simply to be exemplified by the play. If there be any one essential, ever-recurring and definite point in the life unfolded in our play, he thinks it is this, that lasting prosperity, sure and practical success, can only be attained by moderation in all things, by the skilful employment and the cheerful endurance of given circumstances, equally removed from defiant opposition and cowardly submission. This, would, however, again amount to a moral, though of a somewhat looser form. "Strong feeling, together with clear and sure reasoning," says Kreyssig at the end of his lecture, "balance each other in the character pervading the whole. Fortune favours the righteous provided they boldly and cleverly seek to win her favour; but rigid idealism, even although infinitely more amiable and worthy of respect, shows itself scarcely less dangerous than hardened selfishness."

KARL ELZE.—*Essays on Shakespeare* (1874) pp. 67—70.

THE  
MERCHANT OF VENICE.

ACT II.

SCENE II. *Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.*

*Enter BASSANIO, PORTIA, GRATIANO, NERISSA,  
and Attendants.*

*Bassanio.* But let me to my fortune and the caskets.

*Portia.* Away, then ! I am lock'd in one of them :

If you do love me, you will find me out.

Nerissa and the rest, stand all aloof.

Let music sound while he doth make his choice;

Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,

Fading in music : that the comparison

May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream

And watery death-bed for him. He may win ;

And what is music then ? Then music is

Even as the flourish when true subjects bow

To a new-crowned monarch : such it is

As are those dulcet sounds in break of day

That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear  
And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,  
With no less presence, but with much more love,  
Than young Alcides, when he did redeem  
The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy  
To the sea-monster : I stand for sacrifice ;  
The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,  
With bleared visages, come forth to view  
The issue of the exploit. Go, Hercules !  
Live thou, I live : with much much more dismay  
I view the fight than thou that makest the fray.

*Music, whilst BASSANIO comments on the caskets  
to himself.*

SONG.

Tell me where is fancy bred,  
Or in the heart or in the head ?

How begot, how nourished ?

Reply, reply.

It is engender'd in the eyes,  
With gazing fed ; and fancy diés  
In the cradle where it lies.

Let us all ring fancy's knell :

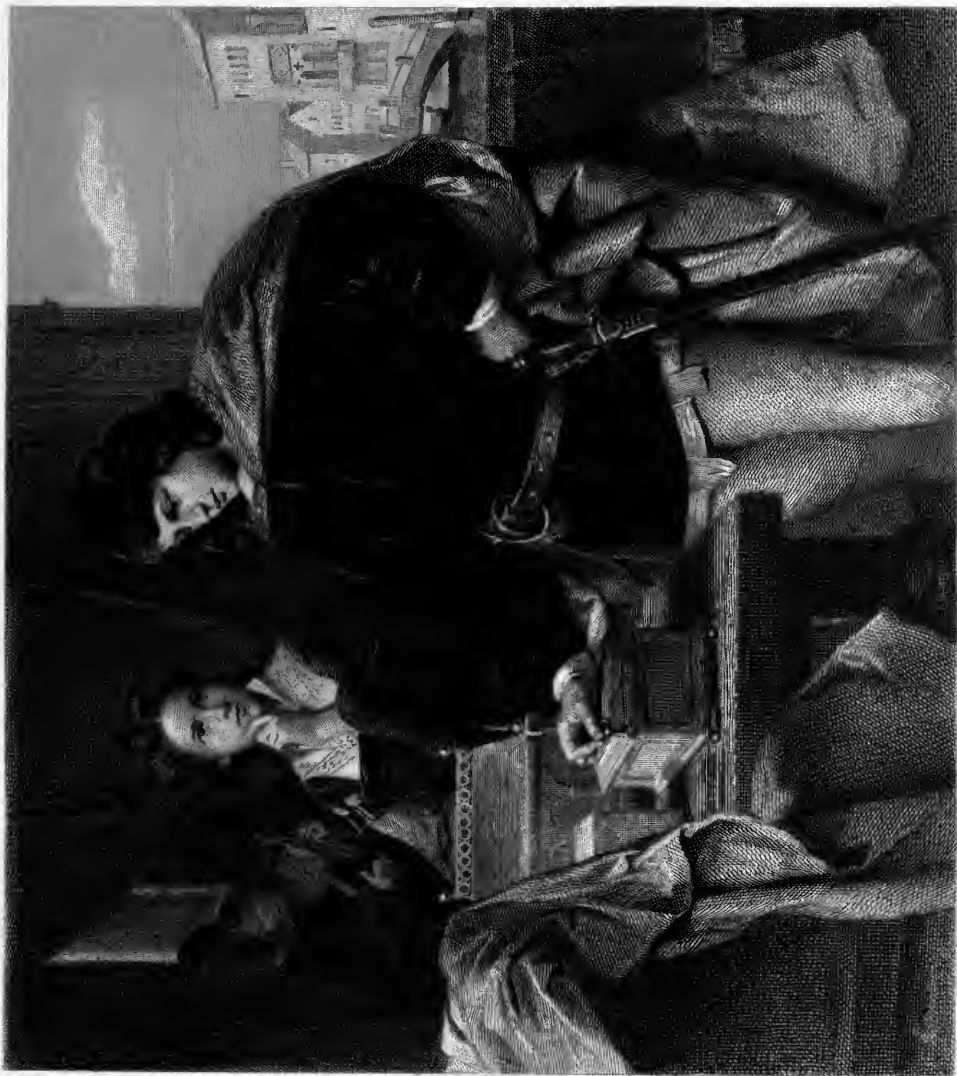
I'll begin it,—Ding, dong, bell.

*All.* Ding, dong, bell.

THE CHARACTER OF PORTIA.

PORTIA is endued with her own share of those delightful qualities which Shakespeare has lavished on many of his female characters ; but besides the dignity, the sweetness and tenderness which should distinguish her sex generally, she is individualized by qualities peculiar to herself ; by her high mental powers, her enthusiasm of temperament, her decision of purpose, and her buoyancy of spirit. These are innate ; she has other distinguishing qualities more external, and which are the result of the circumstances in which she is placed. Thus she is the heiress of a princely name and countless wealth ; a train of obedient pleasures have ever waited round her ; and from infancy she has breathed an atmosphere redolent of perfume and blandishment. Accordingly there is a commanding grace, a high-bred, airy elegance, a spirit of magnificence in all that she does and says, as one to whom splendour has been familiar from her very birth. She treads as though





A. Golding sc.

H. Adams del.

Der Hofmann von Venedig - The Merchant of Venice.



her footsteps had been among marble palaces, beneath roofs of fretted gold, o'er cedar floors and pavements of jasper and porphyry—amid gardens full of statues, and flowers, and fountains, and haunting music. She is full of penetrative wisdom, and genuine tenderness, and lively wit; but as she has never known want, or grief, or fear, or disappointment, her wisdom is without a touch of the sombre or the sad; her affections are all mixed up with faith, hope, and joy; and her wit has not a particle of malevolence or causticity. . . .

I come now to that capacity for warm and generous affection, that tenderness of heart, which render Portia not less lovable as a woman, than admirable for her mental endowments. The affections are to the intellect what the forge is to the metal; it is they which temper and shape it to all good purposes, and soften, strengthen, and purify it. What an exquisite stroke of judgment in the poet, to make the mutual passion of Portia and Bassanio, though unacknowledged to each other, anterior to the opening of the play! Bassanio's confession very properly comes first and prepares us for Portia's half-betrayed unconscious election of this most graceful and chivalrous admirer. Our interest is thus awakened for the lovers from the very first; and what shall be said of the casket scene with Bassanio, where every line which Portia speaks is so worthy of herself, so full of sentiment and beauty and poetry and passion? Too naturally frank for disguise, too modest to confess her depth of love while the issue of the trial remains in suspense, the conflict between love and fear, and maidenly dignity, cause the most delicious confusion that ever tinged a woman's cheek, or dropped in broken utterance from her lips.

A prominent feature in Portia's character is that confiding buoyant spirit, which mingles with all her thoughts and affections. And here let me observe, that I never yet met in real life, nor ever read in tale or history, of any woman, distinguished for intellect of the highest order, who was not also remarkable for this trusting spirit, this hopefulness and cheerfulness of temper, which is compatible with the most serious habits of thought, and the most profound sensibility. Lady Wortley Montagu was one instance; and Madame de Staël furnishes another much more memorable: In her Corinne whom she drew from herself, this natural brightness of temper is a prominent part of the character. A disposition to doubt, to suspect, and to despond in the young, argues, in general, some inherent weakness, moral or physical, or some miserable and radical error of education; in the old, it is one of the first symptoms of age; it speaks of the influence of sorrow and experience, and foreshows the decay of the stronger and more generous powers of the soul. Portia's strength of intellect takes a natural tinge from the flush and bloom of her young and prosperous existence, and from her fervent imagination. In the casket scene, she fears indeed the issue of the trial, on which more than her life is hazarded; but while she trembles, her hope is stronger than her fear. While Bassanio

is contemplating the casket, she suffers herself to dwell for one moment on the possibility of disappointment and misery :—

“ Let music sound while he doth make his choice ;  
Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,  
Fading in music ; that the comparison  
May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream  
And watery death-bed for him.”

Then immediately follows that revulsion of feeling, so beautifully characteristic of the hopeful, trusting, mounting spirit of this noble creature :—

“ He may win ;  
And what is music then ? Then music is  
Even as the flourish when true subjects bow  
To a new-crowned monarch : such it is  
As are those dulcet sounds in break of day  
That creep into the dreaming bridegroom’s ear,  
And summon him to marriage. Now he goes  
With no less presence, but with much more love  
Than young Alcides, when he did redeem  
The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy  
To the sea monster. I stand for sacrifice.”

Here, not only the feeling itself, born of the elastic and sanguine spirit which had never been touched by grief, but the images in which it comes arrayed to her fancy—the bridegroom waked by music on his wedding morn,—the new-crowned monarch,—the comparison of Bassanio to the young Alcides, and of herself to the daughter of Laomedon,—are all precisely what would have suggested themselves to the fine poetical imagination of Portia in such a moment.

Her passionate exclamations of delight, when Bassanio has fixed on the right casket, are as strong as though she had despaired before. Fear and doubt she could repel ; the native elasticity of her mind bore up against them ; yet she makes us feel that, as the sudden joy overpowers her almost to fainting, the disappointment would certainly have killed her.

Her subsequent surrender of herself in heart and soul, of her maiden freedom, and her vast possessions, can never be read without deep emotions ; for not only all the tenderness and delicacy of a devoted woman are here blended with all the dignity which becomes the princely heiress of Belmont, but the serious, measured self-possession of her address to her lover, when all suspense is over, and all concealment superfluous, is most beautifully consistent with the character. It is, in truth, an awful moment, that in which a gifted woman first discovers that, besides talents and powers, she has also passions and affections ; when she first begins to suspect their vast importance in the sum of her existence ; when she first confesses that her happiness is no longer in her own keeping, but is surrendered for ever and for ever into the dominion of another ! The

possession of uncommon powers of mind are so far from affording relief or resource in the first intoxicating surprise—I had almost said horror—of such a revelation, that they render it more intense. The sources of thought multiply beyond calculation the sources of feeling; and mingled they rush together, a torrent deep as strong. Because Portia is endued with that enlarged comprehension which looks before and after, she does not feel the less, but the more: because from the height of her commanding intellect she can contemplate the force, the tendency, the consequences of her own sentiments—because she is fully sensible of her own situation, and the value of all she concedes—the concession is not made with less entireness and devotion of heart, less confidence in the truth and worth of her lover, than when Juliet, in a similar moment, but without any such intrusive reflections—any check but the instinctive delicacy of her sex, flings herself and her fortunes at the feet of her lover—

“ And all my fortunes at thy foot I’ll lay,  
And follow thee, my lord, through all the world.”

In Portia’s confession, which is not breathed from a moon-lit balcony, but spoken openly in the presence of her attendants and vassals, there is nothing of the passionate self-abandonment of Juliet; nor of the artless simplicity of Miranda, but a consciousness and a tender seriousness approaching to solemnity, which are not less touching.

Mrs. JAMESON.—*Characteristics of Women*, Vol. I. pp. 73—91.

## SHAKESPEARE’S COMEDIES ARE ARABESQUES OF THE FANCY.<sup>1</sup>

THE poetry of Shakespeare naturally finds an outlet in the fantastical. This is the highest grade of unreasoning and creative imagination. Despising ordinary logic, it creates therefrom another; it unites facts and ideas in a new order, apparently absurd, at bottom legitimate; it lays open the land of dreams, and its dreams deceive us like the truth. When we enter upon Shakespeare’s comedies, . . . it is as though we met him on the threshold, like an actor to whom the prologue is committed, to prevent misunderstanding on the part of the public, and to tell them, “Do not take too seriously what you are about to hear; I am joking. My brain, being full of fancies, desired to make plays of them, and here they are. Palaces, distant landscapes, trans-

<sup>1</sup> In contrast with the German method of looking for a central idea in each of Shakespeare’s plays (see with special reference to the *Merchant of Venice*, pp. 76–77), this passage from a distinguished French critic is of interest. The truth,

as English readers are instinctively aware, lies between these two extreme views—the comedies are neither caprices nor philosophies, but joyous presentations of human character and human life.

parent mists which blot the morning sky with their grey clouds, the red and glorious flames into which the evening sun descends, white cloisters in endless vista through the ambient air, grottos, cottages, the fantastic pageant of all human passions, the mad sport of unlooked-for chances,—this is the medley of forms, colours, sentiments which I shuffle and mingle before me, a many-tinted skein of glistening silks, a slender arabesque, whose sinuous curves, crossing and confused, bewilder the mind by the whimsical variety of their infinite complications.' Don't regard it as a picture. Don't look for a precise composition, harmonious and increasing interest, the skilful management of a well-ordered and congruous plot. I have novels and romances in my mind which I am cutting up into scenes. Never mind the *finis*, I am amusing myself on the road. It is not the end of the journey which pleases me, but the journey itself. Is there any good in going so straight and quick? Do you only care to know whether the poor merchant of Venice will escape Shylock's knife? Here are two happy lovers, seated under the palace walls on a calm night; wouldn't you like to listen to the peaceful reverie which rises like a perfume from the bottom of their hearts?

“ ‘How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!’ ”

Have I not the right, when I see the big, laughing face of a clownish servant, to stop near him, see him mouth, frolic, gossip, go through his hundred pranks and his hundred grimaces, and treat myself to the comedy of his spirit and gaiety? Two fine gentlemen pass by. I hear the rolling fire of their metaphors, and I follow their skirmish of wit. Here in a corner is the artless arch face of a young wench. Do you forbid me to linger by her, to watch her smiles, her sudden blushes, the childish pout of her rosy lips, the coquetry of her pretty motions? You are in a great hurry if the prattle of this fresh and musical voice can't stop you. Is it no pleasure to view this succession of sentiments and figures? Is your fancy so dull, that you must have the mighty mechanism of a geometrical plot to shake it? My sixteenth-century playgoers were easier to move. A sun-beam that had lost its way on an old wall, a foolish song thrown into the middle of a drama, occupied their mind as well as the blackest of catastrophes. After the horrible scene in which Shylock brandished his butcher's knife before Antonio's bare breast, they saw just as willingly the petty household wrangle, and the amusing bit of raillery which ends the piece. Like soft moving water their soul rose and sank in an instant to the level of the poet's emotion, and their sentiments readily flowed in the bed he had prepared for them. They let him go about on his journey, and did not forbid him to make two voyages at once. They allowed several plots in one. If but the slightest thread united them, it was sufficient. Lorenzo eloped with Jessica, Shylock was frustrated in his revenge, Portia's suitors failed in the test imposed upon them; Portia, disguised

as a doctor of laws, took from her husband the ring which he had promised never to part with ; these three or four comedies, disunited, mingled, were shuffled and unfolded together, like an unknotted skein, in which threads of a hundred colours are entwined. Together with diversity my spectators allowed improbability. Comedy is a slight winged creature, which flutters from dream to dream, whose wings you would break if you held it captive in the narrow prison of common sense. Do not press its fictions too hard ; do not probe their contents. Let them float before your eyes like a charming swift dream. Let the fleeting apparition plunge back into the bright misty land from whence it came. For an instant it deceived you ; let it suffice. It is sweet to leave the world of realities behind you ; the mind can rest amidst impossibilities. We are happy when delivered from the rough chains of logic, when we wander amongst strange adventures, when we live in sheer romance, and know we are living there. I do not try to deceive you, and make you believe in the world where I take you. One must disbelieve in order to enjoy it. We must give ourselves up to illusion, and feel that we are giving ourselves up to it. We must smile as we listen. We smile in the *Winter's Tale*, when Hermione descends from her pedestal, and when Leontes discovers his wife in the statue, having believed her to be dead. We smile in *Cymbeline*, when we see the lone cavern in which the young princes have lived like savage hunters. Improbability deprives emotions of their sting. The events interest or touch us without making us suffer. At the very moment when sympathy is too lively, we remind ourselves that it is all a fancy. They become like distant objects, whose distance softens their outline, and wraps them in a luminous veil of blue air. Your true comedy is an opera. We listen to sentiments without thinking too much of plot. We follow the tender or gay melodies without reflecting that they interrupt the action. We dream elsewhere on hearing music ; here I bid you dream on hearing verse."

HENRI A. TAINE.—*History of English Literature*. Translated  
by H. Van Laun (ed. 1871), Vol. I. pp. 340—343.

THE  
TAMING OF THE SHREW.

## ACT IV.

SCENE I. PETRUCHIO'S *country house*.

PETRUCHIO, KATHARINA, and Servants.

*Pet.* Go, rascals, go, and fetch my supper in.*[Exeunt Servants.]**[Singing]* Where is the life that late I led—  
Where are those—Sit down, Kate, and welcome.—

Soud, soud, soud, soud !

*Re-enter Servants with supper.*

Why, when, I say ? Nay, good sweet Kate, be merry.

Off with my boots, you rogues ! you villains, when ?

*[Sings]* It was the friar of orders gréy,  
As he forth walked on his way :—

Out, you rogue ! you pluck my foot awry :

Take that, and mend the plucking off the other.

*[Strikes him.]*Be merry, Kate. Some water, here ; what, ho !  
Where's my spaniel, Troilus ? Sirrah, get you hence,

And bid my cousin Ferdinand come hither :

One, Kate, that you must kiss, and be acquainted with.

Where are my slippers ? Shall I have some water ?

*Enter one with water.*Come, Kate, and wash, and welcome heartily.  
You whoreson villain ! will you let it fall ?*[Strikes him.]**Kath.* Patience, I pray you ; 'twas a fault unwilling.*Pet.* A whoreson, beetle-headed, flap-eared knave !

Come, Kate, sit down ; I know you have a stomach.

Will you give thanks, sweet Kate ; or else shall I ?  
What's this ? mutton ?*First Serv.* Ay.*Pet.* Who brought it ?*Peter.* I.*Pet.* 'Tis burnt ; and so is all the meat.What dogs are these ! Where is the rascal cook ?  
How durst you, villains, bring it from the dresser,  
And serve it thus to me that love it not ?  
There, take it to you, trenchers, cups, and all :*[Throws the meat, &c. about the stage.]*You heedless joltheads and unmanner'd slaves !  
What, do you grumble ? I'll be with you straight.*Kath.* I pray you, husband, be not so disquiet :

The meat was well, if you were so contented.

*Pet.* I tell thee, Kate, 'twas burnt and dried away ;And I expressly am forbid to touch it,  
For it engenders choler, planteth anger ;  
And better 'twere that both of us did fast,  
Since, of ourselves, ourselves are choleric,  
Than feed it with such over-roasted flesh.Be patient ; to-morrow 't shall be mended,  
And, for this night, we'll fast for company :

Come, I will bring thee to thy bridal chamber.

*[Exeunt.]*





Abtunung einer Lautenspielerin - Tuning of the lute.



## THE TAMING OF THE SHREW.

IT is almost inconceivable that the composition of this rude farce should ever have been ascribed to Shakespeare. In its stiff, formal construction it exhibits all the characteristics of the older English Comedy, and possesses nothing of that which characterizes Shakespeare even in his earliest plays—the bold and energetic individuality of his dramatic personages. For this deficiency it tries to make up, only by a number of lay-figures, or rather well-known, conventional masks, in which little of individual character can be discerned. But while this is unconditionally true of the entire design and structure, there may be found numerous traces of a rehandling of the piece—unquestionably the work of Shakespeare—which first breathed into it the breath of life, and on account of which it obtained admittance into the earliest collected edition of Shakespeare's plays, edited by his friends Heminge and Condell. The closing scene, full of brightness and spirit, as it is, appears especially Shakespearian. The play in its earlier form was probably printed in the year 1594, and may have been the work of one of Shakespeare's predecessors, Marlowe or Greene. We cannot suppose that so rude a play was a production even of the earliest period of Shakespeare's dramatic career. Probably the rightness of its main idea induced him to undertake its remodelling, in which he evidently left to the players the individualizing of the greater number of the characters, and occupied himself almost exclusively with Petruchio and Katharina.

However this may be, the production is beyond doubt the offspring of many parents, materials derived from at least three quarters being welded together in its construction; first, the somewhat rude and clumsy induction, with its old-world story of the lord and the tinker; next, the episode borrowed from Ariosto, of Lucentio and Bianca; finally, the story of the Shrew, which, if not wholly of English origin, certainly in the creation of Katharina corresponds most closely with the English character. We are not prepared indeed to hazard the bold assertion that out of the fulness of the riches of our female world very creditable competitors of this eminently national figure—charming variations running through all the keys with equal grace—might not be placed over against Katharina. Other nations seem never to have been quite lacking in such treasures of humanity, as the classical figure of Madame Xantippe may help us to believe.

In truth, the love of contradiction is evidently one of the first developed and strongest tendencies of human nature, and men are distinguished from women with respect to it chiefly perhaps by this—that in their case it seems to us nothing noteworthy or unusual. Nor because with men it arises from essentially different causes, does it therefore admit more readily of a cure. The possibility of this last, indeed, even after Shakespeare's attempt to represent such a cure, we must always look on as a little doubtful, although it

was precisely this which attracted the poet to undertake the interesting theme. And assuredly the central idea of the play, which is clearly kept before us throughout, is one not unfavourable to the nature of woman—namely, that through love the gravest faults of female character may be amended, while one would hardly dare to say that the same service could be rendered by love in many cases to the natures of men.

This holds good, we say, of women, and of women alone, if even, as the wicked world will declare, the cure is not unattended by occasional relapses.

If the central idea of the transformation of the fair Katharina be not unassailable, so too the remedial treatment is, to please our taste, in most of its details, somewhat too harsh and searching. Fear plays almost a greater part in it than love. Still, in the main, the process is the right one—Petruccio makes Katharina see clearly her own helplessness—he convinces her that she is the weaker of the two, and therefore must submit.

Such was not the case in the home of her childhood; compared with her father and her sisters, Katharina was the stronger, and therefore took her own way as she pleased. But there is no need in the nature of woman so strong and deep, as that of a superior and a protector. . . .

That Petruccio should enter upon the struggle with the Shrew with so light a heart, that he should plunge into it so mirthfully, implies as a necessary condition his assured consciousness of his own masculine force, and his physical superiority. Only possessed of such consciousness can he say—

“ I know she is an irksome brawling scold :  
 If that be all, masters, I hear no harm. . . .  
 Think you a little din can daunt mine ears ?  
 Have I not in my time heard lions roar ?  
 Have I not heard the sea puff'd up with winds  
 Rage like an angry boar chafed with sweat ?  
 Have I not heard great ordnance in the field,  
 And heaven's artillery thunder in the skies ?  
 Have I not in a pitched battle heard  
 Loud 'larums, neighing steeds, and trumpets clang ?  
 And do you tell me of a woman's breath  
 That gives not half so great a blow to hear  
 As will a chestnut in a farmer's fire ?  
 Tush, tush ! fear boys with bugs.”

He knows well the chief conditions which are essential to a happy marriage, and acts resolutely so that none shall be lacking. Next to the masculine superiority of the husband, there is nothing so important as the matter of ways and means; therefore, with most prosaic but most prudent decision, Petruccio questions the paterfamilias about the marriage-portion, and sets him at ease on the score of his own solvency :—

“ Signior Baptista, my business asketh haste,  
 And every day I cannot come to woo.  
 You knew my father well, and in him me,  
 Left solely heir to all his lands and goods,  
 Which I have better'd rather than decreased :  
 Then tell me if I get your daughter's love,  
 What dowry shall I have with her to wife ? ”

When Baptista, after having given the needful information, faintly interposes—

“ Ay, when the special thing is well obtain'd,  
 That is, her love ; for that is all in all, ”

Petruchio calmly replies—

“ Why that is nothing ; for I tell you, father,  
 I am as peremptory as she proud-minded ;  
 And where two raging fires meet together  
 They do consume the thing that feeds their fury :  
 Though little fire grows great with little wind,  
 Yet extreme gusts will blow out fire and all ;  
 So I to her, and so she yields to me ;  
 But I am rough and woo not like a babe. ”

The experience of ten thousand years proves that notwithstanding all the romantic outcries, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred Petruchio is right, that is, if a man is to fulfil the first and chief conditions of wedded union, and be the sovereign ruler, but also the nourisher and cherisher of his wife.

How little other advantages count for, and especially mental qualities, Shakespeare shows us—evidently writing from his own experience with Anne Hathaway,<sup>1</sup>—by the instance of Hortensio, on whose head the lute has been broken, perhaps just after he has played upon it the most immortal melody :—

“ *Bap.* Why, then thou canst not break her to the lute ?  
*Hor.* Why, no ; for she hath broke the lute to me.  
 I did but tell her she mistook her frets,  
 And bow'd her hand to teach her fingering ;  
 When with a most impatient, devilish spirit,  
 ‘ Frets call you these ? ’ quoth she ; ‘ I'll fume with them : ’  
 And with that word she struck me on the head,  
 And through the instrument my pate made way. ”

The “ Softly, softly woman woo, ” as gentle poets and artist-natures may, wins women no doubt, as long as fame, and the recognition and admiration of others can take the

<sup>1</sup> The reader must hope that Herr Pecht meant this for a joke, as it is convenient to smile at such

a piece of Shakesperian biography, and would be a waste of power to grow indignant.

place of external advantages; but it is only for a time, and can never last long; the end is always that of Hortensio, unless there be on the one side a truly masculine character, or on the woman's side an extraordinary sensitiveness of nature, which, to confess the truth, belongs only to rare exceptions among women.

And well that it is so! we may add; for it is the chief distinction of women that they stand nearer to nature in all things than do men. If Venus prefers the fierce Mars to the inventive Vulcan, this preference at least ensures the vigour of the race; one who limps and is ailing should not seek a wife. That the wife is bodily and spiritually the "weaker vessel," who needs protection, and whose part it is to obey and not command, is proved by Petruchio to his Katharina not only by his treatment of her as though she were an ill-mannered child, but also explained to her in somewhat boisterous terms and without Petruchio's concerning himself much about her opinion of the matter:—

" And therefore, setting all this chat aside,  
Thus in plain terms : your father hath consented  
That you shall be my wife : your dowry 'greed on ;  
And, will you, nill you, I will marry you.  
Now, Kate, I am a husband for your turn ;  
For, by this light, whereby I see thy beauty,  
Thy beauty that doth make me like thee well,  
Thou must be married to no man but me ;  
For I am he am born to tame you, Kate,  
And bring you from a wild Kate to a Kate  
Conformable as other household Kates."

As he possesses that which with ladies, old and young, is the first requirement—a good figure and a determined bearing—our Katharina submits patiently to this treatment, and now contents herself with sustaining the part of a lamb led to the sacrifice:—

" I must, forsooth, be forced  
To give my hand opposed against my heart  
Unto a mad-brain rudesby full of spleen ;  
Who woo'd in haste, and means to wed at leisure."

She now takes it ill that he does not immediately make his appearance:—

" I told you, I, he was a frantic fool,  
Hiding his bitter jests in blunt behaviour :  
And, to be noted for a merry man,  
He'll woo a thousand, 'point the day of marriage,  
Make feasts, invite friends, and prepare the banns ;  
Yet never means to wed where he hath woo'd.  
Now must the world point at poor Katharine,  
And say, ' Lo, there is mad Petruchio's wife  
If it would please him come and marry her.' "

Arrived at this point, Petruchio is before all else careful to demonstrate to the fair bride that he will allow himself to be trifled with by no one—not by her, and still less by others. Already from Gremio's narrative we infer that she will find herself widely astray, if she supposes that she can play the devil's dam with him. When she is unceremoniously called a devil, Gremio replies :—

“ Tut, she's a lamb, a dove, a fool to him !  
 I'll tell you, Sir Lucencio ; when the priest  
 Should ask, if Katharine should be his wife,  
 ‘ Ay, by gogs-wouns,’ quoth he ; and swore so loud,  
 That, all amazed, the priest let fall the book ;  
 And as he stoop'd again to take it up,  
 The mad-brain'd bridegroom took him such a cuff  
 That down fell priest and book, and book and priest,  
 ‘ Now take them up,’ quoth he, ‘ if any list.’ ”

He sets to work in this manner, making it his business at the same time on all occasions to honour and pay court to his wife in the presence of others, and manifest his love to her :—

*Tranio.* What said the wench when he rose again ?  
*Gremio.* Trembled and shook ; for why, he stamp'd and swore  
 As if the vicar meant to cozen him . . . .  
 This done, he took the bride about the neck  
 And kiss'd her lips with such a clamorous smack  
 That at the parting all the church did echo . . . .  
 Such a mad marriage never was before.”

If appearance be often more precious to woman in her inmost heart than reality, this is not least the case in the matter of love ; else how could men approach them with the help of gallantry, which is only the appearance and not the reality of respect, of love, and of deference ?

But the best and most time-honoured means of making a wife sensible of her dependence, and need of aid, is to take her on a wedding-tour, and accordingly forthwith this means is adopted by Petruchio ; he casts her loose from her moorings, where she knew that she rode safely, and as an object of importance. With a painful sense that her feet will no longer tread the sure and familiar ground, she makes her last attempt at opposition :—

“ Nay, then,  
 Do what thou canst, I will not go to-day ;  
 No nor to-morrow, not till I please myself.  
 The door is open, sir ; there lies your way ;  
 You may be jogging whiles your boots are green ;  
 For me I'll not be gone till I please myself :  
 'Tis like you'll prove a jolly surly groom,  
 That take it on you at the first so roundly.”

And Petruchio, in the style which suits an overgrown child, makes clear to her the true state of affairs :—

“ They shall go forward, Kate, at thy command.  
 Obey the bride, you that attend on her ;  
 Go to the feast, revel, and domineer,  
 Carouse full measure to her maidenhead,  
 Be mad and merry, or go hang yourselves ;  
 But for my bonny Kate, she must with me.  
 Nay look not big, nor stamp, nor stare, nor fret ;  
 I will be master of what is mine own :  
 She is my goods, my chattels ; she is my house,  
 My household stuff, my field, my barn,  
 My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything.”

Every woman, after all, depends upon authority, example, custom, and obeys him whom she sees everyone else obey, and who shows her wherever he goes that he will be master. Thus Katharina begins to grow submissive when she observes how her husband deals with the household servants, in that scene of feigned passion which our artist represents. If the entire procedure seems too rude for our present views, and might not now be very effective, we must not, at the same time, forget that other times needed other forms, and that if it did not prejudice their love that the hero Siegfried should soundly flog the noble Chriemhild on account of her hasty tongue, this in Shakespeare's time, at least as far as the servants are concerned, might pass unchallenged.

F. PECHT.—*Shakespeare-Galerie. Zählung einer Widerspenstigen.*

### THE TAMING OF THE SHREW.

THE *Taming of the Shrew* is almost the only one of Shakespeare's comedies that has a regular plot, and downright moral. It is full of bustle, animation, and rapidity of action. It shows admirably how self-will is only to be got the better of by stronger will, and how one degree of ridiculous perversity is only to be driven out by another still greater. Petruchio is a madman in his senses ; a very honest fellow, who hardly speaks a word of truth, and succeeds in all his tricks and impostures. He acts his assumed character to the life, with the most fantastical extravagance, with complete presence of mind, with untired animal spirits, and without a particle of ill-humour from beginning to end. . . .

The most striking and at the same time laughable feature in the character of Petruchio throughout, is the studied approximation to the intractable character of real madness, his apparent insensibility to all external considerations, and utter indifference to everything but the wild and extravagant freaks of his own self-will. There is no contending with a person on whom nothing makes any impression but his own purposes, and who is bent



on his own whims just in proportion as they seem to want common sense. With him a thing's being plain and reasonable is a reason against it. The airs he gives himself are infinite, and his caprices as sudden as they are groundless. The whole of his treatment of his wife at home is in the same spirit of ironical attention and inverted gallantry. Everything flies before his will, and he only metamorphoses his wife's temper by metamorphosing her senses and all the objects she sees, at a word's speaking. . . . The whole is carried off with equal spirit. It is as if the poet's comic Muse had wings of fire. . . .

*The Taming of the Shrew* is a play within a play. It is supposed to be a play acted for the benefit of Sly the tinker, who is made to believe himself a lord, when he wakes after a drunken brawl. The character of Sly and the remarks with which he accompanies the play are as good as the play itself. His answer when he is asked how he likes it, "Indifferent well; 'tis a good piece of work—would 'twere done," is in good keeping, as if he were thinking of his Saturday night's job. Sly does not change his tastes with his new situation, but in the midst of splendour and luxury still calls out lustily and repeatedly for "a pot o' the smallest ale." He is very slow in giving up his personal identity in his sudden advancement. "I am Christophero Sly; call me not honour nor lordship. I ne'er drank sack in my life: and if you give me any conserves, give me conserves of beef; ne'er ask me what raiment I'll wear, for I have no more doublets than backs, no more stockings than legs, nor no more shoes than feet, nay, sometimes more feet than shoes, or such shoes as my toes look through the over-leather.—What, would you make me mad? Am not I Christophero Sly, old Sly's son of Burton Heath, by birth a pedlar, by education a cardmaker, by transmutation a bear-herd, and now by present profession a tinker? Ask Marian Hacket, the fat alewife of Wincot, if she know me not; if she say I am not fourteen-pence on the score for sheer ale, score me up for the lying'st knave in Christendom."

This is honest. "The Slies are no rogues," as he says of himself. We have a great predilection for this representative of the family; and what makes us like him the better is, that we take him to be of kin (not many degrees removed) to Sancho Panza.

W. HAZLITT.—*Characters of Shakespear's Plays* (1818), pp. 312—319.

## FIRST PART OF KING HENRY IV.

### ACT II.

SCENE IV. *The Boar's-Head Tavern, Eastcheap.*

*Enter FALSTAFF, GADSHILL, BARDOLPH, and PETO.*

*Falstaff.* A plague of all cowards still say I.

*Prince.* What's the matter?

*Fal.* What's the matter! there be four of us here have ta'en a thousand pound this day morning.

*Prince.* Where is it, Jack? where is it?

*Fal.* Where is it! taken from us it is: a hundred upon poor four of us.

*Prince.* What, a hundred, man?

*Fal.* I am a rogue, if I were not at half-sword with a dozen of them two hours together. I have 'scaped by miracle. I am eight times thrust through the doublet, four through the hose; my buckler cut through and through; my sword hacked like a hand-saw—*ecce signum!* I never dealt better since I was a man: all would not do. A plague of all cowards! Let them speak: if they speak more or less than truth, they are villains and the sons of darkness.

*Prince.* Speak, sirs; how was it?

*Gads.* We four set upon some dozen—

*Fal.* Sixteen at least, my lord.

*Gads.* And bound them.

*Peto.* No, no, they were not bound.

*Fal.* You rogue, they were bound, every man of them; or I am a Jew else, an Ebrew Jew.

*Gads.* As we were sharing, some six or seven fresh men set upon us—

*Fal.* And unbound the rest, and then came in the other.

*Prince.* What, fought you with them all?

*Fal.* All! I know not what you call all; but if I fought not with fifty of them, I am a bunch of radish: if there were not two or three and fifty upon poor old Jack, then am I no two-legged creature.

*Prince.* Pray God you have not murdered some of them.

*Fal.* Nay, that's past praying for: I have peppered two of them; two I am sure I have paid, two rogues in buckram suits. I tell thee what, Hal, if I tell thee a lie, spit in my face, call me horse. Thou knowest my old ward; here I lay, and thus I bore my point. Four rogues in buckram let drive at me—

*Prince.* What, four? thou saidst but two even now.

*Fal.* Four, Hal; I told thee four.

*Poins.* Ay, ay, he said four.

*Fal.* These four came all a-front, and mainly thrust at me. I made me no more ado but took all their seven points in my target, thus.

*Prince.* Seven? why, there were but four even now.

*Fal.* In buckram?

*Poins.* Ay, four, in buckram suits.

*Fal.* Seven, by these hilts, or I am a villain else.

*Prince.* Prithee, let him alone; we shall have more anon.

*Fal.* Dost thou hear me, Hal?

*Prince.* Ay, and mark thee too, Jack.

*Fal.* Do so, for it is worth the listening to. These nine in buckram that I told thee of—

*Prince.* So, two more already.

*Fal.* Their points being broken,—

*Poins.* Down fell their hose.

*Fal.* Began to give me ground: but I followed me close, came in foot and hand; and with a thought seven of the eleven I paid.

*Prince.* O monstrous! eleven buckram men grown out of two!



W. Williams del.

1850

King & Heinrich der Wolf, oder der Mann, der rief, Wolf, war!



THE CHARACTER OF FALSTAFF.<sup>1</sup>

“**JACK FALSTAFF** to my familiars!”—By that name, therefore, must he be known by all persons, for all are now the familiars of Falstaff. The title of “Sir John Falstaff to all Europe” is but secondary and parochial. He has long since far exceeded the limit by which he bounded the knowledge of his knighthood; and in wide-spreading territories, which in the day of his creation were untrodden by human foot, and in teeming realms where the very name of England was then unheard of, Jack Falstaff is known as familiarly as he was in the wonderful court of princes, beggars, judges, swindlers, heroes, bullies, gentlemen, scoundrels, justices, thieves, knights, tapsters, and the rest whom he drew about him.

It is indeed *his* court. He is lord paramount, the *suzerain* to whom all pay homage . . . Henry . . . is subject and vassal of Falstaff. He is bound by the necromancy of genius to the “white-bearded Satan,” who, he feels, is leading him to perdition. It is in vain that he thinks it utterly unfitting that he should engage in such an enterprise as the robbery at Gadshill; for in spite of all protestations to the contrary, he joins the expedition merely to see how his master will get through his difficulty. He struggles hard, but to no purpose. Go he must, and he goes accordingly. . . . At their next meeting, after detecting and exposing the stories related by the knight, how different is the result from what had been predicted by Poincils when laying the plot. . . . Does Poincils *reprove* him, interpret the word as we will? Poincils indeed! That were *lèse-majesté*. Does the prince? Why, he tries a jest, but it breaks down; and Falstaff victoriously orders sack and merriment with an accent of command not to be disputed. In a moment after he is selected to meet Sir John Bracy, sent special with the villainous news of the insurrection of the Percys; and in another moment he is seated on his joint-stool, the mimic King of England, lecturing with a mixture of jest and earnest the real Prince of Wales.

The temptation to represent the gross fat man upon the stage as a mere buffoon, and

<sup>1</sup> Falstaff has been a bewilderment, through his manifold qualities, to the critics of Shakespeare. It is, therefore, interesting to present two or three different views of his character. The longest extract is from one of the few pieces of criticism of the last century which exhibits reverence and enthusiasm for the genius of Shakespeare. It was written professedly with the object of proving that Falstaff was no coward. The author, Maurice Morgann, was once Under-Secretary of State. Of

Falstaff, Victor Hugo writes:—“Falstaff, glutton, poltroon, ferocious, filthy, the face and paunch of a man, with the lower members those of a brute, walks upon the four feet of baseness; Falstaff is the centaur formed from a swine.” In the clever paradox of Dr. Maginn there is a larger portion of truth than in this conception of the great French idealist, who is incapable of conceiving a character so complex as that of Shakespeare’s Falstaff.

to turn the attention of the spectators to the corporal qualities and the practical jests of which he is the object, could hardly be resisted by the players; and the popular notion is, that he is no better than an upper-class Scapin. A proper consideration, not merely of the character of his mind as displayed in the lavish abundance of ever-ready wit, and the sound good sense of his searching observation, but of the position which he always held in society, should have freed the Falstaff of the cabinet from such an imputation.

. . . . In fact he is a dissipated man of rank, with a thousand times more wit than ever fell to the lot of all the men of rank in the world. But he has ill played his cards in the world. . . . The tragic Macbeth, in the agony of his last struggle acknowledges with a deep despair that the things which should accompany old age—"as honour, love, obedience, troops of friends"—he must not look to have. The comic Falstaff says nothing on the subject; but by the choice of such associates as Bardolph, Pistol, and the rest of that following, he tacitly declares that he too has lost the advantages which should be attendant on years. No curses loud or deep have accompanied his festive career; its conclusion is not the less sad on that account; neglect, forgotten friendship, services overlooked, shared pleasures unremembered, and fair occasions gone for ever by, haunt him, no doubt, as sharply as the consciousness of deserving universal hatred galls the soul of Macbeth. . . . We must observe that he never laughs. Others laugh with him or at him, but no laughter from him who occasions or permits it. He jests with a sad brow. The wit which he profusely scatters about is from the head, not from the heart. .

. . . He rises before me as an elderly and very corpulent gentleman, dressed like other military men of the time (of Elizabeth, observe, not Henry), yellow-cheeked, white-bearded, double-chinned, with a good-humoured but grave expression of countenance, sensuality in the lower features of his face and high intellect in the upper.

WILLIAM MAGINN, LL.D.—*Shakespeare Papers*, pp. 25—58.

### CHARACTER OF FALSTAFF.

To me then it appears that the leading quality in Falstaff's character, and that from which all the rest take their colour, is a high degree of wit and humour, accompanied with great natural vigour and alacrity of mind. This quality, so accompanied, led him probably very early into life, and made him highly acceptable to society; so acceptable as to make it seem unnecessary for him to acquire any other virtue. Hence, perhaps, his continued debaucheries and dissipations of every kind. He seems by nature to have had a mind free from malice or any evil principle; but he never took the trouble of acquiring

any good one. He found himself esteemed and loved with all his faults; nay, *for his faults, which were all connected with humour, and for the most part grew out of it.* As he had, possibly, no vices but such as he thought might be openly professed, so he appeared more dissolute through ostentation. To the character of wit and humour, to which all his other qualities seem to have confined themselves, he appears to have added a very necessary support, *that of the profession of a soldier.* He had from nature, as I presume to say, a spirit of boldness and enterprise, which, in a military age, though employment was only occasional, kept him always above contempt, secured him an honourable reception among the great, and suited best both with his particular mode of humour and of vice. Thus living continually in society, nay, even in taverns, and indulging himself, and being indulged by others, in every debauchery; drinking, whoring, gluttony, and ease; assuming a liberty of fiction, necessary perhaps to his wit, and often falling into falsity and lies; he seems to have set, by degrees, all sober reputation at defiance; and finding eternal resource in his wit, he borrows, shifts, defrauds, and even robs, without dishonour. Laughter and approbation attend his greatest excesses, and, being governed visibly by no settled bad principle or ill design, fun and humour account for and cover all. By degrees, however, and through indulgence, he acquires bad habits, becomes a humourist, grows enormously corpulent, and falls into the infirmities of age; yet never quits, all the time, one single levity or vice of youth, or loses any of that cheerfulness of mind which had enabled him to pass through this course with ease to himself and delight to others; and thus, at last, mixing youth and age, enterprise and corpulency, wit and folly, poverty and expense, title and buffoonery, innocence as to purpose, and wickedness as to practice; neither incurring hatred by bad principle, nor contempt by cowardice, yet involved in circumstances productive of imputation in both; a butt and a wit, a humourist and a man of humour, a touchstone and a laughing-stock, a jester and a jest; has Sir John Falstaff,—taken at that period of his life in which we see him,—become the most perfect comic character that perhaps ever was exhibited.

As to the arts by which Shakespeare has contrived to obscure the vices of Falstaff, they are such, as being subservient only to the mirth of the play, I do not feel myself obliged to detail.

But it may be well worth our curiosity to inquire into the composition of Falstaff's character. Every man we may observe has two characters; that is, every man may be seen externally, and from without;—or a section may be made of him, and he may be illuminated from within.

Of the external character of Falstaff, we can scarcely be said to have any steady view. *Jack Falstaff* we are familiar with, but *Sir John* was better known, it seems, to the rest of Europe, than to his intimate companions; yet we have so many glimpses of him, and he is opened to us occasionally in such various points of view, that we cannot be mistaken

in describing him as a man of birth and fashion, bred up in all the learning and accomplishments of the times; of ability and courage equal to any situation, and capable by nature of the highest affairs; trained to arms, and possessing the tone, the deportment, and the manners of a gentleman;—but yet these accomplishments and advantages seem to hang loose upon him, and to be worn with a slovenly carelessness and inattention: a too great indulgence of the qualities of humour and wit seems to draw him too much one way, and to destroy the grace and orderly arrangement of his other accomplishments;—and hence he becomes strongly marked for one advantage, to the injury and almost forgetfulness, in the beholder, of all the rest. Some of his vices likewise strike through, and stain his exterior; his modes of speech betray a certain licentiousness of mind; and that high aristocratic tone which belonged to his situation, was pushed on and aggravated into unfeeling insolence and oppression. . . . Such a character as I have here described, strengthened with that vigour, force, and alacrity of mind, of which he is possessed, must have spread terror and dismay through the ignorant, the timid, the modest, and the weak; yet is he, however, when occasion requires, capable of much accommodation and flattery; and in order to obtain the protection and patronage of the great, so convenient to his vices and his poverty, he was put under the daily necessity of practising and improving these arts; a baseness which he compensates to himself by an increase of insolence towards his inferiors.—There is, also, a natural activity about Falstaff, which, for want of proper employment, shows itself in a kind of swell or bustle, which seems to correspond with his bulk, as if his mind had inflated his body, and demanded a habitation of no less circumference: thus conditioned, he rolls (in the language of Ossian) like a *whale of ocean*, scattering the smaller fry; but affording in his turn, noble contention to Hal and Poin; who, to keep up the allusion, I may be allowed on this occasion to compare to the *thresher* and the *sword-fish*.

To this part of Falstaff's character, many things which he says and does, and which appear unaccountably natural, are to be referred.

We are next to see him *from within*: and here we shall behold him most villainously unprincipled and debauched; possessing, indeed, the same courage and ability, yet stained with numerous vices, unsuited not only to his primary qualities, but to his age, corpulency, rank, and profession; reduced by these vices to a state of dependence, yet resolutely bent to indulge them at any price. These vices have been already enumerated; they are many, and become yet more intolerable by an excess of unfeeling insolence on the one hand, and of base accommodation on the other.

But what then, after all, is become of *old Jack*? Is this the jovial delightful companion—Falstaff, the favourite and the boast of the stage?—by no means. But it is, I think, however, the *Falstaff* of nature; the very stuff out of which the *stage Falstaff* is composed; nor was it possible, I believe, out of any other materials he could have been



formed. From this disagreeable draught we shall be able, I trust, by a proper disposition of light and shade, and from the influence and compression of external things, to produce plump Jack, the life of humour, the spirit of pleasantry, and the soul of mirth.

To this end, Falstaff must no longer be considered as a single independent character, but grouped, as we find him shown to us in the play; his ability must be disgraced by buffoonery, and his courage by circumstances of imputation; and those qualities be therefore reduced into subjects of mirth and laughter: his vices must be concealed at each end from vicious design and evil effect, and must thereupon be turned into incongruities, and assume the name of humour only; his insolence must be repressed by the superior tone of Hal and Poins, and take the softer name of spirit only, or alacrity of mind; his state of dependence, his temper of accommodation, and his activity, must fall in precisely with the indulgence of his humours; that is, he must thrive best, and flatter most, by being extravagantly incongruous; and his own tendency, impelled by so much activity, will carry him with perfect ease and freedom to all the necessary excesses. But why, it may be asked, should incongruities recommend Falstaff to the favour of the Prince? Because the Prince is supposed to possess a high relish of humour, and to have a temper and a force about him, which, whatever was his pursuit, delighted in excess. This, Falstaff is supposed perfectly to comprehend; and thereupon not only to indulge himself in all kinds of incongruity, but to lend out his own superior wit and humour against himself, and to heighten the ridicule by all the tricks and arts of buffoonery for which his corpulence, his age, and situation furnish such excellent materials. This completes the dramatic character of Falstaff, and gives him that appearance of perfect good-nature, pleasantry, mellowness, and hilarity of mind, for which we admire and almost love him, though we feel certain reserves which forbid our going that length; the true reason of which is, that there will be always found a difference between mere appearances and reality; nor are we, nor can we, be insensible, that whenever the action of external influence upon him is in whole or in part relaxed, the character restores itself proportionably to its more unpleasing condition. . . . .

Such, I think, is the true character of this extraordinary buffoon; and hence we may discern for what special purposes Shakespeare has given him talents and qualities, which were to be afterwards obscured, and perverted to ends opposite to their nature; it was clearly to furnish out a stage buffoon of a peculiar sort; a kind of game-bull which would stand the baiting through a hundred plays, and produce equal sport, whether he is pinned down by Hal or Poins, or tosses such mongrels as Bardolph, or the justices, sprawling in the air. There is in truth no such thing as totally demolishing Falstaff; he has so much of the invulnerable in his frame, that no ridicule can destroy him; he is safe even in defeat, and seems to rise, like another Antæus, with recruited vigour from every fall; in this, as in every other respect, unlike Parolles or Bobadil; they fall by the

first shaft of ridicule, but Falstaff is a butt on which we may empty the whole quiver, whilst the substance of his character remains unimpaired. His ill habits, and the accidents of age and corpulence, are no part of his essential constitution; they come forward indeed on our eye and solicit our notice, but they are second natures, not *first*; mere shadows, we pursue them in vain; Falstaff himself has a distinct and separate subsistence; he laughs at the chase, and when the sport is over, gathers them with unruffled feather under his wing; and hence it is that he is made to undergo not one detection only, but a series of detections; that he is not formed for one play only, but was intended originally at least for two; and the author, we are told, was doubtful if he should not extend him yet farther, and engage him in the wars with France. This he might well have done, for there is nothing perishable in the nature of Falstaff: he might have involved himself, by the vicious part of his character, in new difficulties and unlucky situations, and have enabled him, by the better part, to have scrambled through, abiding and retorting the jests and laughter of every beholder.

MAURICE MORGANN.—*An Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff*, pp. 18-21, and pp. 170-181.

### FALSTAFF, PANURGE, SANCHO. X

FINALLY, three great men, Rabelais, Cervantes, Shakespeare, realise and personify the prince's jester, each according to his own views; giving him a body, a soul, a countenance, fashioning him at their pleasure, uniting in this creation all that is deepest in their intellect; mingling, to complete this work, philosophy with satire, poetry with practical observation; taking advantage of what their national traditions offered to them; adorning this child of their love with all the comic ideas which their imagination could devise, bringing into the world *Panurge, Falstaff, Sancho*; a grotesque trinity; living beings whom we all know, whom we have seen, whom we have loved, whom every art has reproduced in a thousand various attitudes, and whose immortal and humorous existence will be a sport for men as long as Europe preserves a memory of the past.

They are alike in one point. Born in the sixteenth century, when the middle ages were expiring, these are the types of material sensuality and voluptuous egoism opposed to all serious affairs and ideal faiths. All three regard their bodies with a tender and constant solicitude; good living and *bien-être*, that is their philosophy. They form a chorus of jesters; they furnish a complete criticism on all which attracts man beyond the

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limits of the material life—platonic love, the passion for conquest, ambition, melancholy, mysticism. It is the pleasure of the senses which mocks the demands of the spirit ; the body that mocks the soul.<sup>1</sup>

PHILARETE CHASLES.—*Etudes sur W. Shakspeare*, pp. 296—97.

<sup>1</sup> An interesting comparison between Panurge, Falstaff, and Sancho, follows in M. Chasles's study of the *Types Buffons du XVI<sup>e</sup> Siècle*.

FIRST PART OF KING  
HENRY IV.

ACT II.

SCENE III. *Warkworth Castle.*

HOTSPUR and LADY PERCY.

*Hot.* What, ho!

*Enter Servant.*

Is Gilliams with the packet gone?

*Serv.* He is, my lord, an hour ago.

*Hot.* Hath Butler brought those horses from the sheriff?

*Serv.* One horse, my lord, he brought even now.

*Hot.* What horse? a roan, a crop-ear, is it not?

*Serv.* It is, my lord.

*Hot.* That roan shall be my throne.

Well, I will back him straight : O esperance !  
Bid Butler lead him forth into the park.

*[Exit Servant.]*

*Lady.* But hear you, my lord.

*Hot.* What say'st thou, my lady?

*Lady.* What is it carries you away?

*Hot.* Why, my horse, my love, my horse.

*Lady.* Out, you mad-headed ape!

A weasel hath not such a deal of spleen  
As you are toss'd with. In faith,  
I'll know your business, Harry, that I will.  
I fear my brother Mortimer doth stir  
About his title, and hath sent for you  
To line his enterprize : but if you go,—

*Hot.* So far afoot, I shall be weary, love.

*Lady.* Come, come, you paraquito, answer me  
Directly unto this question that I ask :  
In faith, I'll break thy little finger, Harry,  
An if thou wilt not tell me all things true.

*Hot.* Away,  
Away, you trifler ! Love ! I love thee not,  
I care not for thee, Kate : this is no world  
To play with mammets and to tilt with lips :  
We must have bloody noses and crack'd crowns,  
And pass them current too. God's me, my  
horse !

What say'st thou, Kate ? what wouldst thou  
have with me ?

*Lady.* Do you not love me ? do you not,  
indeed ?

Well, do not then ; for since you love me not,  
I will not love myself. Do you not love me ?  
Nay, tell me if you speak in jest or no.

*Hot.* Come, wilt thou see me ride ?  
And when I am o' horseback, I will swear  
I love thee infinitely. But hark you, Kate ;  
I must not have you henceforth question me  
Whither I go, nor reason whereabouts :  
Whither I must, I must ; and, to conclude,  
This evening must I leave you, gentle Kate.  
I know you wise, but yet no farther wise  
Than Harry Percy's wife : constant you are,  
But yet a woman : and for secrecy,  
No lady closer ; for I well believe  
Thou wilt not utter what thou dost not know ;  
And so far will I trust thee, gentle Kate.

*Lady.* How ! so far ?

*Hot.* Not an inch further. But hark you,  
Kate :

Whither I go, thither shall you go too ;  
To-day will I set forth, to-morrow you.  
Will this content you, Kate ?

*Lady.* It must of force. *[Exeunt.]*



*M. Adamo del.*

*A. Haussé sc.*

*160*  
*König Heinrich IV. Erste That ~ King Henry IV., Part I.*



## THE SUBJECT OF THE PLAY OF "KING HENRY IV."—PART I. X

THE subject-matter of this play is the fulfilment of the prophecy of the deposed Richard in the preceding history. In the theological language of antiquity, the gods punished the crimes of Richard by the hands of Bolingbroke, and now exact from Bolingbroke the penalty for the crimes by which he wreaked their wrath and vengeance; this judgment again is inflicted through the crimes of others, from whom punishment is again requirable: and this is fate, and thus is continued the endless chain of wrong and wrong in vicious self-reproduction, and the theory has no more prospect of solution forwards, than in its vain retrospect through a vista of successive iniquities, branching out from antipathies among the gods themselves, and discord even in heaven. Hatred of tyranny scarcely reaches its height, when pity for the deposed tyrant directs our aversion upon his subverter, and sympathy with the liberator is forfeited by the crimes of the insurgent.

Such may, in fact, be very much the appearance of the world's history, if we glance at the conflicts of dynasties and nations, their crimes, and contests, and exterminations—such, if we take even an extended section of mischief and political retribution; but if we look wider and further, it may not be so, and in this case, a poet who, in a work—a composition—has to concentrate a moral, and is allowed and is even bound to give intimations of wider scope and deeper penetration than mere unelaborated detail of events can furnish—who must give his picture completeness, and roundness, and satisfying conclusiveness, by bringing all actions more completely to a close and independent determination than belongs to any set of incidents in nature, with their numberless annexments,—the poet working under this bond is constrained to comprise in his abstract of a period some hint of the general tendency—some glimpse of the ultimate direction and settlement of the whole, if such indeed there be.

In *Richard II.* the ruin of the country was averted by the only available means at hand, the substitution of the energetic Henry IV.; but the new system has disadvantages that promise to rival those that have been given up. The title is weakened by consciousness of deceit and murder, making it, in fact, a usurpation; and then by the discontents of the aiding instruments, who are all the more importunate from the very baseness and wickedness of the acts they assisted at, or were art and part in. It is difficult to bring home to confederated rogues the moral of self-denial, or any other rule, in dividing the plunder, than the simple rule of share and share alike or in proportions rateable according to villainy; and it is well if each does not consider that his own claim is preponderant above all—and the principal may overclaim as grossly as his meanest confederate. The destinies of the country are tied to the accidents of an

individual's disposition, and it escapes from those of a frivolous character only to hang in dependence upon others, scarcely less dangerous, of a strong character.

Hence the difficulties of irregular succession ; the liberator struggles to be a usurper and a tyrant, or he must subdue his own supporters whom he cannot satisfy, whether these are a few almost independent barons or a numerous soldiery. The form the contest takes depends not only on the circumstances of the usurpation or conquest, but also on the personal disposition and talents of the monarch. The moral aspect of the case depends upon how far he identifies his own interests with those of the nation, and aspires to more power or gives up more than national interests require. History furnishes abundant varieties, and perhaps even an example of the best. Usually kingdoms are gained by pretexts that render the subsequent administration of them a counter-sense. Power grasped by vicious plans refuses to yield itself to virtuous purposes, or power gained by virtuous efforts and co-operation is turned to vicious aims. False or even impossible expectations have been wilfully excited, and the sown wind is harvested in whirlwind ; thus turmoil arises, and sometimes the difficulties are surmounted, and sometimes not. The conqueror gratifies his aids to the ruin of his conquests, or it may be to the sacrifice of his own power ; or he succeeds in rendering himself independent of them by means more or less violent, more or less fair, or a compromise is arranged ; and, according to these circumstances, the country falls under an energetic tyrant instead of an unstable one, relapses into civil discord, or really acquires some step in the direction of stability and freedom.

*Kings* [In the present instance we see the able, energetic, and crafty king vexed by the pride of the powerful nobles, who had helped him to the crown, and are reminiscent of the time when he himself, a powerful noble, stood in hardy opposition to his king.] There is jealousy, and distrust, and provocation on either side, but Henry stands as the representative of the kingdom, of the injuries or discontents of which we hear nothing ; and the Percys take thus the unfavoured part of disturbers of the public peace, whose private wrongs, even as they state them, do not claim much sympathy, as they are at least as guilty as the king. The description of the civil war at the beginning assists the imagination, and also helps the reason to true judgment of the disorder and its origin.

In *Richard II.* the crown is borne down by the resistance of an injured and high-spirited nobleman to general tyranny ; the same contest is now to be renewed, but on more equal terms ; and vigour, precaution, and kingly spirit are now matched in opposition against nobles, high-spirited, and it may be injured, but representing no national injuries—no public cause.

W. W. LLOYD.—*Essays on the Life and Plays of Shakespeare* (ed. 1858).  
*On the First Part of Henry IV.*



## THE CHARACTER OF HOTSPUR. X

HARRY PERCY, most commonly surnamed "Hotspur," is of the same order and genus with the illustrious "representative" character in *King John*, the brave, the steadily-loyal, and the grateful Falconbridge. And yet, withal, there is a palpable distinction to be drawn between the two characters; of the same genus, but of distinct individuality. Both are fiery and impetuous men; both perilously brave; both of noble and generous natures; and here, it would seem, the class-likeness ceases. In the midst of his greatest excitements, Falconbridge always displays presence of mind and deliberation. Hotspur evinces no deficiency in the one quality, but he has neither the deliberation nor the judgment of Falconbridge. Indeed, Hotspur has little judgment, and less deliberation. The soliloquies of Falconbridge are pregnant with sound sense and a flaunting sort of mess-room humour. Hotspur has no reflectiveness; he acts, he does not soliloquise. (The only time that he discourses in soliloquy he is commenting upon the letter he has received from the party whom he had endeavoured to enlist in the rebellion; and most characteristic of the man are his ejaculations as he comes upon the writer's phlegmatic doubts of the success of their enterprise. It commences in the third scene of the second Act.) The manner as well as the language of Percy are sustained with wonderful consistency of individuality. One of the most prominent features of his personal character is that of perpetual restlessness, to which may be added abundant determination, always combined with rashness and indiscretion. There is one peculiarity in the personal individuality of Hotspur which is quite as carefully detailed as that of any character that Shakespeare has drawn. In the identity of Falconbridge we have no other distinction, no other personal association with him than the general one of his athletic frame. He is a man of thews and sinews. Speaking of his mother's husband, he says, "Sir Robert never help to make this leg." In Hotspur, on the other hand, we have constant allusion to some peculiarity or other which makes us feel as though we had known him. First, there is the total lack of repose, already alluded to: he is like a wild beast newly confined. Then, his impetuosity of disposition naturally shows itself in perpetual interruptions during consultations, the most celebrated of which occurs in the third scene of the first Act. It is the one in which the king orders him to send in his prisoners unransomed. The remainder of the scene (when the king has quitted it) is passed in a series of explosions and interruptions, till the patience of his uncle Worcester begins to fail, and he expostulates with him—"Good cousin, *give me audience for a while.*" Hotspur apologises—"I cry you mercy!" and again bursts in upon Worcester's first words. At length the uncle concludes—"Farewell, kinsman! I will talk to you when you are better tempered to attend."

Then his father Northumberland, irritated by his unreasonable interruptions, takes him to task—

“ Why, what a wasp-tongue and impatient fool  
Art thou to break into this woman’s mood,  
Tying thine ear to no tongue but thine own.”

They try again, and again Worcester concludes—“ We’ll stay your leisure.”

It is interesting to trace throughout the career of Percy the total absence of all repose in the character. Not only is he never quiet himself, but he resents inaction in others. He resents his father being in ill-health. “ Zounds, how has he leisure to be sick in such a justling time ? ”

Again, in a subsequent scene, a messenger enters—

“ My lord, here are letters for you.  
Hot. I cannot read them now.”

Prince Henry bears testimony to his hurry-scurry life where he says :—

“ I am not yet of Percy’s mind, the Hotspur of the north ; he that kills me some six or seven dozen Scots at a breakfast, washes his hands, and says to his wife—‘ Fie upon this quiet life ! I want work.’ ‘ O my sweet Harry,’ says she, ‘ how many hast thou killed to-day ? ’ ‘ Give my roan horse a drench,’ says he ; and answers, ‘ Some fourteen,’ an hour after—‘ a trifle, a trifle.’ ”

It is worth observing here that the poet has made a marked point of this “ roan horse ” of Percy’s. He has used it as a means of drawing attention to a point of individuality in Hotspur, who manifests a true soldierly interest and judgment concerning his horse. He asks his servant whether “ those horses have been brought from the sheriff.” The man answers, “ One horse, my lord, he brought even now.” And Hotspur instantly shows that he has noted its points—

“ What horse ? a roan, a crop-car, is it not ?  
Serv. It is, my lord.  
Hot. That roan shall be my throne.”

In this same scene (the third of the second Act) there is ample proof of his restlessness. When the Lady Percy makes him a remonstrance, and with it a vivid picture of his altered manner and perturbed sleep, gently demanding the cause, he does not rest to answer her, but shouts to his servant, asking some questions about the despatch of a packet. And when his wife persists in affectionate expostulation, he breaks from her, bidding her “ come and see him ride,” knowing that when once on horseback he shall be beyond reach of her catechising.

CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE.—*Shakespeare Characters* (1863), pp. 416—419.

## THE COURAGE OF HOTSPUR AND OF PRINCE HENRY. ✓

WHEREAS the object of *King John* pre-eminently was to set forth the true relation of the ecclesiastical power to the civil, and of *Richard II.* to elucidate the real import of the sovereignty, the *First Part of Henry IV.* places in a conspicuous light the power of the nobles, and the *essence of chivalry*, with its historical foundation of personal *proWess*. . . . The character of the Prince, who plays so prominent a part in both pieces, was absolutely indispensable. In the first place, it was requisite to illustrate the true nature of that personal valour which was the foundation of chivalry, and of its great influence. Of courage there are two kinds—two different qualities—bearing, however, the same names; one is an *inborn* natural daring, the confidence of the physical man in his own personal prowess, which leads him to contend against all difficulties, and unreflectingly and ignorantly exposes itself to all dangers; in short, seeks them out, and finds a pleasure in them, either as indispensable for its own development, or for its eman-<sup>all</sup>ipation from the restraints which unsubdued difficulties impose upon it. But the other species of bravery is altogether of an *intellectual* nature, and consists in the mind's conscious superiority over any danger that may threaten, by which it either overcomes it, or, in spite of outward discomfiture, is nevertheless the conqueror. This is the courage of all the great heroes of history—of Alexander, of Hannibal, and of Cæsar, &c. Both species are exhibited in this drama; the latter in the person of Prince Henry, the former in that of the Earl of Douglas, but still more so in that of the young Percy. With great discrimination, therefore, has Shakespeare delineated with such detail and at such length the character of Hotspur, not merely in reference to his father and other leaders of the revolt, but also to his wife, and servants. He displays towards every one the same restrained bluntness and forced vehemence, and the same defiance and haughtiness. On the other hand, it was no less necessary to bring out clearly and pregnantly the superior character of the Prince. Evidently it was not possible for his open and buoyant disposition to develop itself freely in the narrow circle of the court, and under the restraints which the King's humours and formality of nature would have placed upon it; in so sultry an atmosphere it could not live and flourish; it longed for a freer and more stirring air, and this it found in the society of Falstaff and his crew. The more he differed from these both inwardly and outwardly, the more necessary was it that his superior energies should shine forth brilliantly—as, for instance, in the fight with Percy—and eventually more fully realize themselves in the greatest achievements.

HERMANN ULRICI.—*Shakspeare's Dramatic Art* (1846)

(translated by A. J. W. M.), pp. 370—371.

## HOTSPUR AND LADY PERCY. X

PERFECTLY true and of a golden heart, far removed from all malice, inaccessible to cunning and deceit, Hotspur's nature is utterly at variance with the vile and corrupt policy and diplomacy of the King. He is nettled and scourged with rods if he only hears of it; and [when the King imputes to Mortimer the crime of having intentionally given himself up a prisoner to Glendower, his indignation bursts forth in his presence: "Never did base and rotten policy colour her working with such deadly wounds."] His utter aversion to all untruth renders him heartily angry at Glendower's whimsical bragging. He cannot listen to praise and flattery, and blame he cannot suppress, even if he should offend new and insecure friends by it. On such occasions he suffers his vehemence and roughness to be reprov'd, and scornfully blesses manners more refined and commended. An enemy to all affectation, to all show and vanity, he is an enemy also to all false, unmanly refinement. He would rather hear "a dry wheel grate on an axle-tree" than mincing poetry; he would rather be "a kitten and cry—Mew" than be a ballad-monger; and music and singing he thinks "the next way to turn tailor, or be red-breast teacher." Averse to these tender arts, he is so also to all false sentimentality. The charming scene between him and his wife shows that he loves because he banter's; no other expression for its love could this unaffected nature find. How could Ulrici imitate the absurd Horn in declaring that Percy's wife was only his chief servant? How can he reconcile it with Henry Percy's character to swear on horseback to his wife that he loves her infinitely, if these were only empty words to a servant? Such love rests closely and firmly on the certain superiority of the husband and on the golden confidence of the wife, who possesses the rare quality of understanding the fervour of her husband's love in his jests and banterings, and from whose remembrance this "miracle of men" can never pass away.

G. G. GERVINUS.—*Shakespeare Commentaries* (ed. 1875), p. 310.





J. Blandin

1797

King Henry the Fourth, Part II.

SECOND PART OF KING  
HENRY IV.

## ACT IV.

SCENE V. *A Chamber.**The KING lying on a bed, PRINCE HENRY.**K. Hen.* Come hither, Harry ; sit thou by my bed,

And hear, I think, the very latest counsel  
That ever I shall breathe. God knows, my son,  
By what by-paths and indirect crook'd ways  
I met this crown ; and I myself know well  
How troublesome it sat upon my head.  
To thee it shall descend with better quiet,  
Better opinion, better confirmation ;  
For all the soil of the achievement goes  
With me into the earth. It seem'd in me  
But as an honour snatch'd with boisterous hand ;  
And I had many living to upbraid  
My gain of it by their assistances ;  
Which daily grew to quarrel and to bloodshed,  
Wounding supposed peace : all these bold fears  
Thou see'st with peril I have answered ;  
For all my reign hath been but as a scene  
Acting that argument : and now my death  
Changes the mode ; for what in me was pur-  
chased,

Falls upon thee in a more fairer sort ;  
So thou the garland wear'st successively.  
Yet, though thou stand'st more sure than I could  
do,  
Thou art not firm enough, since griefs are green ;  
And all my friends, which thou must make thy  
friends,  
Have but their stings and teeth newly ta'en out ;  
By whose fell working I was first advanced  
And by whose power I well might lodge a fear  
To be again displaced : which to avoid,  
I cut them off ; and had a purpose now  
To lead out many to the Holy Land,  
Lest rest and standing still might make them  
look  
Too near unto my state. Therefore, my Harry,  
Be it thy course to busy giddy minds  
With foreign quarrels ; that action, hence borne  
out,  
May waste the memory of the former days.  
More would I, but my lungs are wasted so  
That strength of speech is utterly denied me.  
How I came by the crown, O God forgive ;  
And grant it may with thee in true peace live !  
*Prince.* My gracious liege,  
You won it, wore it, kept it, gave it me ;  
Then plain and right must my possession be :  
Which I with more thap with a common pain  
'Gainst all the world will rightfully maintain.

## THE PLAY OF "KING HENRY IV."

I N passing from the historical illustrations which the tragedy of *Richard II.* supplied us with . . . . to the illustration we may find in the two parts of *Henry IV.*, one cannot help being struck with the boundless variety of Shakespeare's historic drama, and the versatility of his genius in dealing with these successive periods. While the "Chronicle-Plays" vary in structure and character (no two of them closely corresponding), they are all, for the most part, *tragedies*, for the simple reason that the history of human life is chiefly tragic, especially in the great historic descriptions of men, their deeds and their fortunes. But the two parts of *Henry IV.* contain a large proportion of the *comic* element of life. Tragedy and comedy are here combined to produce the mixed drama. As the scene changes, we behold, as we read, the interior of the palace, with all the business and the stately anxieties and perplexities of the

realm, or the castles of the nobles, where the dark game of conspiracy, or the bolder work of rebellion, is preparing; and then we turn to see the frolic and revelry of a London tavern, with the matchless wit of one of Shakespeare's most remarkable creations sparkling through the sensuality and profligacy of the place. We are now at Windsor with the king, or at Bangor with the insurgent nobles; and then we are at the Boar's Head Tavern with Falstaff and his gay companions. We see Henry IV. in his palace growing wan and careworn with the troubles of his government, becoming an old man in mid life; and then we see Falstaff fat, and doubtless growing fatter as he takes his ease at his inn—an old man of more than threescore years, but with a boyish flow of frolic and spirits—indulging his inexhaustible wit by making merriment for himself and the heir-apparent. We see in this mixed drama the tragic side of war—civil war with the perplexity of the councils of the realm and the fierce deeds of battle; and we see the comic side—Falstaff misusing the king's press—the conscription code of the times—not gathering volunteers for the war, but picking out of the community comfortable, well-conditioned, non-combatant folk, who, as he calculates, will be sure to buy a release, so that he boasts to himself of having got in exchange for one hundred and fifty soldiers three hundred and odd pounds to pay his tavern-bill, or rather to leave his tavern-bill unpaid. . . .

The link of association between the serious and the comic parts of these plays is to be found in the character of him who is the Prince Henry of the palace, and the Prince Hal of his boon companions in the tavern—for we meet with him in both places, more at home, however, in the places of his amusement than in the place of his rank. It is such mixed dramas as the two parts of *Henry IV.* that especially illustrate the remark of Mr. Hallam, that Shakespeare's historical plays "borrow surprising liveliness and probability from the national character and form of government. A prince, a courtier, and a slave are the stuff on which the historic dramatist would have to work in some countries; but every class of freemen, in the just subordination without which neither human society nor the stage, which should be its mirror, can be more than a chaos of huddled units, lay open to the inspection of Shakespeare. What he invented is as truly English, as truly historical in the large sense of moral history, as what he read." . . .

I am inclined to think that Shakespeare felt, that in treating dramatically the reign of Henry IV. he must needs expand the sphere of the drama, so as to comprehend these varied elements, in order to supply the meagre historical interest of the subject. The exuberance of his genius and of his feelings required something more than the cold, uneventful misery of the palace of the politic Henry; and accordingly, going down to the lower stratum of society, he must have delighted in creating Falstaff and his associates to make amends for the dull company of the king and the courtiers and nobles.

The reign of Henry IV. is an uninteresting period of English history; especially does it want *national* interest. After all his long-sustained and successful ambition, he came



to his years of royalty, and they proved years of unceasing solicitude and uncertainty. The old chronicler utters simple truth when he speaks of "the unquiet times of King Henry's reign;" and one of the elder English his-torian accurately describes it when he says, "King Henry's reign was like a craggy mountain, from which there was no descent but by a thousand crooked ways full of rocky stones and jétting cliffs—the first difficulties escaped, others are met with of more danger and anxiety. In such paths he walked all the time of his reign, that one danger was a step to another, and the event always doubtful; for his subjects' former desire being almost extinguished, his friends failing, and his enemies increasing, he had no other support in so painful a descent but his own vigilance and conduct—helps which, though they might cause him to keep on his way, yet they were not sufficient to preserve him from great weariness." And Shakespeare, with that remarkable significancy which he gives to the openings of his plays, indicates in the very first line the character of the reign when the king is introduced, saying—

"So shaken as we are, so worn with care,  
Find we a time for frighted peace to pant."

It is historically true, also, when he is represented, at the beginning of the play and of his reign, meditating a crusade, planning an expedition from England—

"To chase the pagans in those holy fields  
Over whose acres walked those blessed feet  
Which fourteen hundred years ago were nailed,  
For our advantage, to the bitter cross." . . .

The intended crusade was frustrated by impending danger at home. Scarcely was Henry IV. seated on his throne when the flame of war was kindled upon both the western and northern frontiers of England. . . . Henry's reign was, in truth, no more than a succession of conspiracies. The battle of Shrewsbury secured but a brief space of repose, which was soon disturbed by the conspiracy of the Earl of Northumberland and Mowbray and the Archbishop of York. The revolt was quelled, not by another battle, but by policy; and the strong king again proved too strong for his adversaries. But, while his possession of the throne was triumphantly maintained, the crown was glittering on the brow of a melancholy man. The genius of a great poet gives us the vision of the royal sadness; and it is poetry and history combined that present the affecting spectacle of a careworn king, in the scene where Henry, in the noiseless hour of the night, in the lonely splendour of his palace, with slumber estranged from his eyelids, beholding from the palace-window the silent dwellings in a sleeping city, gives utterance to that beautiful apostrophe to sleep—

“ How many thousands of my poorest subjects  
 Are at this hour asleep ! O sleep, O gentle sleep,  
 Nature's soft nurse, how have I frighted thee,  
 That thou no more wilt weigh my eyelids down,  
 And steep my senses in forgetfulness ? ” . . . .

That aching brow was soon to find repose ; those sleepless eyelids were at length to be closed,—but only in the grave. “ Henry Bolingbroke,” it has been said, “ had reigned thirteen years ‘ in great perplexity and little pleasure.’ He had reaped, as he had sown—care, insecurity, suspicion, enmity, and treason ; and ‘ curses not loud but deep.’ Having quelled the rebellious nobles, he revived the project of a voyage to the Holy Land, to recover Jerusalem from the infidels. Preparations were made for the expedition, and the king went to the shrine of St. Edward the Confessor, at Westminster, there to take his leave and to speed him on his voyage.” The hand of death fell on his careworn body there ; and he was carried, to breathe his last, in the adjoining house of the abbot, and not in the palace of the Plantagenets. . . . .

Respecting the career of the Prince of Wales, there appear to be two opposite and conflicting opinions. On the one hand, he is represented as low, profligate, reckless, heartless, and dissolute, the perpetual inmate of taverns, and a licentious brawler. On the other side, the effort is made, and with considerable historical research, to prove that the traditional accounts of the prince's early life are altogether unfounded ; that Shakespeare's representation of him, as a historical portrait, is misleading and unjust, and that the prince's life was blameless and irreproachable. Indeed it might well be said, that a career of excessive profligacy, continued through the years of youth and into the years of manhood, could not in nature be the prelude to a kingly course so sagacious and so heroic. I do not believe that Henry of Monmouth, when Prince of Wales, lived such a life of dissoluteness and profligacy ; and more confident am I that Shakespeare has not so represented it. At the same time, the tradition respecting the prince was too general and too well fortified to be wholly discredited. It cannot reasonably be cast aside as a fiction by which men for a long while—and nobody can tell why—deluded themselves and others. Shakespeare is faithful to the tradition, which he has so informed with the life-giving power of the imagination as to corroborate the truth of it ; and at the same time he has so portrayed Henry's princely days as to reconcile them with his royal days, and thus to represent them in moral harmony. He does not resort to the marvel of a sudden conversion and an instantaneous growth of virtue—a monstrous and unnatural change—which would effectually hinder us from feeling the identity of the Prince Henry of one drama with the King Henry of another. With Shakespeare's guidance, therefore, we can, I am inclined to think, learn what the one, but varied, life of Henry really was ; for the

poet drew the history of that life from tradition, and also from the deep philosophy of human nature in his own soul.

When Prince Henry is first introduced into the drama, it is in the palace, but in the company of two of his gay companions, who visit him there. Whatever contaminating influences there were in such companionship, it was, at least, free from the vice of destroying his moral health by the poison of flattery. So far from anything like this adulation, the conventional restraints of rank are relaxed,—and there is an equality of intercourse, and almost unbounded freedom in it. But all this is on the surface, and does not reach down to the real nature of the prince; for the moment he is left alone, the first words he utters disclose his knowledge of himself and of his companions, and his consciousness of what is due from himself to himself. We see that he has a moral self-possession—whether it will be impaired by such companionship and self-indulgence remains to be considered; but the first soliloquy shows us that, at least, he was not reckless, but that he was thoughtful; and that whatever might be the outward show, silently and secretly he was cherishing lofty and pure aspirations—

“ I know you all, and will a while uphold  
 The unyoked humour of your idleness;  
 Yet herein will I imitate the sun,  
 Who doth permit the base contagious clouds  
 To smother up his beauty from the world,  
 That when he please again to be himself,  
 Being wanted, he may be more wondered at,  
 By breaking through the foul and ugly mists  
 Of vapours that did seem to strangle him.”

This soliloquy, at his first introduction, sets before us the thoughtful element in the prince's character; and we are thus forewarned of the reserved power by which he will be able to raise himself above the loose behaviour and companionship he for a while indulges in. . . .

Neither in the history of the chronicler, nor in the history of the poet, does there appear any such enmity between the king and the Prince of Wales as would throw an impediment in the way of our admiration and enjoyment of the son's character. We feel that it is a difference easily adjusted; and the prince is entitled so to speak, when he gaily tells his companions, “I am good friends with my father, and may do anything.” Now, while the filial relation is duly preserved, it is, on the other hand, desirable that Prince Henry should not be too intimately identified with his father's reign. It is well that he, whose glorious career is to be the theme of a poet's richest praise, should not be associated in our thoughts with an administration of the realm which was so different from his own—a reign of terror and not of loyal love—a reign of divided and not

unanimous allegiance. The dominion of Henry IV. was that of stern, hard, suspicious power. There were conspiracies; and craft and policy were needed to countermine them; but we are glad to believe that, as Shakespeare, following the traditions, has represented it, Prince Hal took little, if any, part in such affairs of the realm.

HENRY REED.—*Lectures on English History and Tragic Poetry as illustrated by Shakespeare* (1856), pp. 109—128.

### THE KING.

ONE reason of Prince Henry's early irregularities seems to have grown from the character of his father. All accounts agree in representing Bolingbroke as a man of great reach and sagacity; a politician of inscrutable craft, full of insinuation, brave in the field, skilful alike at penetrating others' designs and at concealing his own; unscrupulous alike in smiling men into his service and in crunching them up after he had used them. All which is fully borne out in that, though his reign was little else than a series of rebellions and commotions proceeding in part from the injustice whereby he reached the crown and the bad title whereby he held it, yet he always got the better of them, and even turned them to his advantage. [Where he could not win the heart, cutting off the head, and ever plucking fresh security out of the dangers that beset him;] his last years, however, were much embittered, and his death probably hastened, by the anxieties growing out of his position, and the remorse consequent upon his crimes.

But, while such is the character generally ascribed to him, no historian has come near Shakespeare in the painting of it. Much of his best transpiration is given in the preceding play of *Richard II.*, where he is the controlling spirit. For, though Richard is the more prominent character in that play, this is not as the mover of things, but as the receiver of movements caused by another; the effects lighting on him, while the worker of them is comparatively unseen. For one of Bolingbroke's main peculiarities is, that he looks solely to results; and, like a true artist, the better to secure these he keeps his designs and processes in the dark; his power thus operating so secretly, that in whatever he does the thing seems to have done itself to his hand. How intense his enthusiasm, yet how perfect his coolness and composure! Then too, how pregnant and forcible always, yet how calm and gentle, and at times how terrible, his speech! how easily and unconcernedly the words drop from him, yet how pat and home they are to the persons for whom and the occasions whereon they are spoken! To all which add a flaming thirst of power, a most aspiring and mounting ambition, with an equal mixture of humility, boldness, and craft, and the result explains much of the fortune that attends him through all the plays in which he figures. For the Poet keeps him the same man throughout.

So that, taking the whole delineation together, we have at full length and done to the life, the portrait of a man in act prompt, bold, decisive, in thought sly, subtle, far-reaching—a character hard and cold indeed to the feelings, but written all over with success; which has no impulsive gushes or starts, but all is study, forecast, and calm suiting of means to pre-appointed ends. And this perfect self-command is in great part the secret of his strange power over others, making them almost as pliant to his purposes as are the cords and muscles of his own body; so that, as the event proves, he grows great by their feeding till he can compass food enough without their help, and, if they go to hindering him, can eat them up. For so it turned out with the Percys; strong sinews indeed with him for a head; while, against him, their very strength served but to work their own overthrow.

But, though policy was the leading trait in this able man, nevertheless it was not so prominent but that other and better traits were strongly visible. And even in his policy there was much of the breadth and largeness which distinguish the statesman from the politician. Besides he was a man of prodigious spirit and courage, had a real eye to the interests of his country as well as of his family, and in his wars he was humane much beyond the custom of his time. And in the last scene of the Poet's delineation of him, where he says to the prince—

“Come hither, Harry; sit thou by my bed,  
And hear, I think, the very latest counsel  
That ever I shall breathe;”

though we have indeed his subtle policy working out like a ruling passion strong in death, still its workings are suffused with gushes of right feeling enough to show that he was not all politician; that beneath his close-knit prudence there was a soul of moral sense, a kernel of religion.

H. N. HUDSON.—*Shakespeare, his Life, Art, and Characters*  
(1872), Vol. II. pp. 69—71.

### THE CROWN SCENE.

I MUST now call in question the incident in which originated *the Crown Scene*.

This story is in Holinshed, who avowedly took it from Hall. It is also in the old play, which it is evident, to my judgment, suggested to Shakespeare some part of the speeches.

“During his last sickness the king caused his crown (as some write) to be set on a pillow at his bed's head, and suddenly his pangs so sore troubled him that he lay as

though all his vital spirits had been from him departed. Such as were about him, thinking verily that he had departed, covered his face with a linen cloth. The Prince his son, being hereof advertised, entered into the chamber, took away the crown, and departed. The father being suddenly revived out of that trance, quickly perceived the lack of his crown; and having knowledge that the prince his son had taken it away, caused him to come before his presence, requiring of him what he meant to so misuse himself. The prince, *with a good audacity*, answered: 'Sir, to mine and all men's judgments you seemed dead in this world, wherefore, I, as your next heir-apparent, took that as mine own, and not as yours.' 'Well, fair son,' said the king, with a great sigh, 'what right I had to it, God knoweth.' 'Well,' said the prince, 'if you die king, I will have the garland, and trust to keep it with the sword against all my enemies, as you have done.' 'Then,' said the king, 'I commit all to God, and remember you to do well.'" . . . .

No one of the contemporary historians has this story of the crown. Elmham describes the death-bed of Henry with incidents entirely different. The prince took the sacrament with his father, who blessed him after the manner of the patriarchs. The oldest version of it is in the old French chronicle of Monstrelet, who wrote within a few years of the event, though, if alive at the time, he was very young. Monstrelet prefaces his account with a remark which his English chroniclers neglect, and of which Tyler has not availed himself:

"It was *the custom in that country*, whenever the king was ill, to place the royal crown on a cushion beside his bed, and *for his successor to take it on his death.*"

The prince being informed by the attendants that the king was dead, took the crown as a matter of course; and his reviving father did not so much reprove him for his precipitancy as remind him that he had no right to the crown because the father himself had none. The story is told not as *against the son*, but as exhibiting the father's consciousness of his usurpation. The cause of Richard, whose infant wife was a daughter of France, was always popular in that country.

I am not aware that any such custom is mentioned by an English antiquary. The Frenchman may have drawn upon his imagination for the rest of the story as well as for this. But I admit the case to be one of those in which the story itself, and the invention of it without foundation, are both so improbable that there is only a choice of difficulties.

THE RIGHT HON. T. P. COURTENAY.—*Commentaries on the Historical Plays of Shakespeare*, Vol. I. pp. 144—160.





H. Schilling sc.

F. Reich del.

King Henry the Fifth - King Henry the Fifth's







in Kabatt des

Edlberg

*Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor - The merry Wives of Windsor*

## THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

## ACT III.

SCENE III. *A Room in FORD'S House.*

*Mrs. Page.* O Mistress Ford, what have you done? You're shamed, you're overthrown, you're undone for ever!

*Mrs. Ford.* What's the matter, good Mistress Page?

*Mrs. Page.* O well-a-day, Mistress Ford! having an honest man to your husband, to give him such cause of suspicion!

*Mrs. Ford.* What cause of suspicion?

*Mrs. Page.* What cause of suspicion! Out upon you! how am I mistook in you!

*Mrs. Ford.* Why, alas, what's the matter?

*Mrs. Page.* Your husband's coming hither, woman, with all the officers in Windsor, to search for a gentleman that he says is here now in the house by your consent, to take an ill advantage of his absence: you are undone.

*Mrs. Ford.* 'Tis not so, I hope.

*Mrs. Page.* Pray heaven it be not so, that you have such a man here! but 'tis most certain your husband's coming, with half Windsor at his heels, to search for such a one. I come before to tell you. If you know yourself clear, why, I am glad of it; but if you have a friend here, convey, convey him out. Be not amazed; call all your senses to you; defend your reputation, or bid farewell to your good life for ever.

*Mrs. Ford.* What shall I do? There is a

gentleman my dear friend; and I fear not mine own shame so much as his peril: I had rather than a thousand pound he were out of the house.

*Mrs. Page.* For shame! never stand 'you had rather' and 'you had rather': your husband's here at hand; bethink you of some conveyance; in the house you cannot hide him. O, how have you deceived me! Look, here is a basket: if he be of any reasonable stature, he may creep in here; and throw foul linen upon him, as if it were going to bucking: or—it is whitening-time—send him by your two men to Datchet-mead.

*Mrs. Ford.* He's too big to go in there. What shall I do?

*Fal.* [*Coming forward*] Let me see't, let me see't, O, let me see't! I'll in, I'll in. Follow your friend's counsel. I'll in.

*Mrs. Page.* What, Sir John Falstaff! Are these your letters, knight!

*Fal.* I love thee. Help me away. Let me creep in here. I'll never—

[*Gets into the basket; they cover him with foul linen.*]

*Mrs. Page.* Help to cover your master, boy. Call your men, Mistress Ford. You dissembling knight!

*Mrs. Ford.* What, John! Robert! John!

[*Exit Robin.*]

*Re-enter Servants.*

Go take up these clothes here quickly. Where's the cowl-staff? look, how you drumble! Carry them to the laundress in Datchet-mead; quickly, come.

## THE "MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR."

THE *Merry Wives of Windsor* appears from the quarto of 1602 to have been at first hastily written, but was afterwards revised into the more perfect shape in which we now have it. The story goes that the subject was suggested by Queen Elizabeth, and the drama composed at her request. Shakespeare, they say, completed his task in fourteen days. The task itself was rather a vague one; the notion given by her Majesty being simply, "Falstaff in love." Shakespeare himself had formally dismissed the character from his mind; but the increasing

popularity of the delineation had reached royalty, and the poet was evidently not unwilling to work again upon the idea.

But the poet had now to invent new circumstances, unconnected with either the two parts of *Henry IV.* or *Henry V.*, and the critic has a difficulty in assigning a date to the action of the comedy. The more prudent course seems to be to read it between the first and second parts of the former work, in which case we suppose the events to have happened previously to the knight's disgrace. The poet, however, apparently never troubled himself about the matter, content with having to work out the idea with new conditions, and assured that it would find its natural place in the series. We have, indeed, old names to new characters; such as the page and Mrs. Quickly, the latter being now Dr. Caius's servant. As to Falstaff himself, we have him independent of a court life, and in his purely natural character, under temptations strictly private, and in this new view showing still that "the more flesh, the more frailty." . . . Matrimonial fidelity is assailed, but the holy estate is not dishonoured. There is sufficient reverence in it to stand fast of itself, without the interference of Church or State; and sufficient strength to maintain its ground against any amount of license. The honest wives make a fool of the fat knight, and get the laugh against him. Nor will the poet concede the husband's right to jealousy, but manfully defends the honour of womanhood against Ford's caprices. . . .

Falstaff's love is not a sentiment, nor even an appetite. He has outgrown both; but he makes use of a sportive opportunity that flatters his vanity for the hope of an ultimate gain. He would make the two wives his East and West Indies, and profit by any transaction he may have with them. He pleases himself with the notion that he is an object of love to two respectable women, wives of substantial citizens, but inferior in rank to himself. Of this weakness he lives to repent. However, when convinced that, with all his wit, he has been made a fool of, he takes it in good part, and appreciates the jest, though himself its victim. "Well, I am your theme; you have the start of me; I am dejected; I am not able to answer the Welsh flannel. Ignorance itself is a plummet o'er me; use me as you will." There is something noble in the fat old sinner, after all; and Page sees it, and promises that yet Falstaff shall laugh at his wife, who now laughs at Falstaff. And what says Mrs. Page?

" Good husband, let us every one go home,  
And laugh this sport o'er by a country fire,  
Sir John and all."

JOHN A. HERAUD. — *Shakespeare, his Inner Life*, pp. 242—244.

## THE CHARACTERS.

THIS play was a task, and not quite so happy a one as Cowper's. That Queen Bess should have desired to see Falstaff making love proves her to have been, as she was, a gross-minded old baggage. Shakespeare has evaded the difficulty with great skill. He knew that Falstaff could not be in love; and has mixed but a little, a very little *pruritus* with his fortune-hunting courtship. But the Falstaff of the *Merry Wives* is not the Falstaff of *Henry the Fourth*. It is a big-bellied impostor, assuming his name and style, or at best it is Falstaff in dotage. The Mrs. Quickly of Windsor is not mine hostess of the Boar's Head; but she is a very pleasant, busy, good-natured, unprincipled old woman, whom it is impossible to be angry with. Shallow should not have left his seat in Gloucestershire and his magisterial duties. Ford's jealousy is of too serious a complexion for the rest of the play. The merry wives are a delightful pair. Methinks I see them, with their comely middle-aged visages, their dainty white ruffs and toys, their half witchlike conic hats, their full farthingales, their neat though not over-slim waists, their housewifely keys, their girdles, their sly laughing looks, their apple-red cheeks, their brows, the lines whereon look more like the work of mirth than years. And sweet Anne Page—she is a pretty little creature whom one would like to take on one's knee. And poor Slender, how pathetically he fancies himself into love; how tearfully laughable he is in his disappointment, and how painfully ludicrous in his punctilio, how delightful in his valour! How finely he sets forth his achievement to pretty Anne!—"I have seen Sackerson loose." Othello could not brag more amorously. Parson Hugh is a noble Cambro-Briton, but Doctor Caius is rather so-so. Mine Host of the Garter is evidently a portrait. The plot is rather farcical; but no matter, it is exceedingly diverting. There is one passage which shows Shakespeare to have been a Christian, player though he was:—

"Since therein she doth evitate and shun  
A thousand irreligious cursed hours,  
Which forced marriage would have brought upon her."

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.—*Essays and Marginalia*, Vol. II. pp. 133--34.

## PLACE OF THIS PLAY AMONG SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDIES.

THIS Comedy belongs to that class of Shakespeare's plays that is marked by correctness of proportion both in characters and distribution. . . . The characters, which are very numerous—they amount to twenty—are all wrought to an equal degree of finish, and are brought forward or subordinated with the exact relief that corresponds

with their several functions and importance. The scenes follow in succession with admirably regulated length and variety of movement, and with such exact compensation of tone and humour as to move forward the busy action without delay or confusion, without a hint of tediousness or a moment of dissatisfaction, from the beginning to the end. These are qualities that best evidence the height and maturity of poetic powers. Still it is apparent that for such powers the scope and subject of the play did not afford the fullest opportunities of exercise. It is not for an instant to be placed beside the more perfect poetical comedies, beside *As You Like It*, or *Twelfth Night*, or even beside the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*; or perhaps *Love's Labour's Lost*; works for which lavish expenditure of poetic gold vindicates rank in a higher class notwithstanding defects in correctness and proportion. That Shakespeare left unattempted a poetic English Comedy, seems to imply that to his apprehension the scene that harmonized so well with humour and tragic and even heroic action, was not so favourable for romance. Certain it is that the limits within which he restricted himself in the *Merry Wives of Windsor* seem fully accounted for by the nature and truth of the social aspect he was invited to depict. We are introduced to the domestic incidents of English households of the easy middle class. We are among the substantial and thrift-considering gentry, on the margin of the town and the country, with means and leisure, following the minor field sports and open air amusements, not without passions and not without prejudices, but with good solid groundwork of character in right-meaning and deliberateness, and with hearts that sooner or later prove to be in their right places. For the rest the husk of provincial quaintness holds stiffly about them even in their heartiest hospitalities, and they are not apt to be disturbed or distinguished by either variety or vivacity of ideas . . . .

The substantive wit of the piece does not exceed the capabilities of the old English form of the practical joke—the hoax; but these resources are wrought out to the fullest extent, and the humour swells and undulates on the full tide of flowing animal spirits. The hoax is the instrument of the punishments of Falstaff, but these instances do not stand alone; it dissipates the foolish quarrel of Caius and Sir Hugh Evans on the one hand, and on the other it is the means of foiling the ill-considered plans of the parents of Anne Page. The false appointments of the pedagogue and doctor, and the excursion of the latter lured over the country, to his confusion, in the hope of finding Anne Page at a farm-house feasting, are exercises of country mirth of the same class as the false assignations that carry Falstaff into the ditch at Datchet-mead, or conduct him in disguise, under the cudgel of Ford. The mishap of Ford, in his attempts to follow the appointments of Falstaff, and to compete in cleverness with the mirthful matrons, gives the hoax potential; and in the flight of Falstaff through Windsor, as Mother Pratt, eluding, by his “admirably counterfeiting the action of an old woman,” the penal intentions of the rogue constable,

and deceiving the eyes, as he afterwards imposes on the wits of Simple, we have a foreshadowing of the successful hoaxes of the last scene, when Slender exclaims, "If I did not think it had been Anne Page, I might never stir, and 'tis a postmaster's boy;" and Dr. Caius, "Vere is Mistress Page? By gar, I am cozened; I ha' married *un garçon*, a boy." Merriment of this character is not unapt to degenerate into the unfeeling, and all tempers do not bear it equally well. Mine host is made a victim out of retaliation for his jest, and for once is in low spirits; all rancour however explodes at the last harmlessly; Caius will be satisfied by "raising all Windsor," and Slender by communicating how he has been befooled to "the best in Gloucestershire." Ford does not triumph without a little drawback; Mrs. and Mr. Page are foiled at their own weapons, and Falstaff has a laugh at their expense spared to him in his turn. Compensation is complete throughout; the circle of ridicule returns into itself, and the play ends as a comedy should, with liberal amnesty and cordial reconciliation.

W. W. LLOYD.—*Essays on the Life and Plays of Shakespeare* (1858): *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

#### ENGLISH CHARACTER OF THE PLAY.

THE *Merry Wives of Windsor* is one of those delightfully happy plays of Shakespeare, beaming with sunshine and good humour, that makes one feel the better, the lighter, and the happier for having seen or read it. It has a superadded charm, too, from the scene being purely English; and we all know how rare and how precious English sunshine is, both literally and metaphorically. The *Merry Wives* may be designated the "sunshine" of domestic life, as the *As You Like It* is the sunshine of romantic life. The out-door character that pervades both plays gives to them their tone of buoyancy and enjoyment, and true holiday feeling. We have the meeting of Shallow and Slender and Page in the streets of Windsor, who saunter on, chatting of the "fallow greyhound, and of his being out-run on Cotsal;" and, still strolling on, they propose the match between Slender and "sweet Anne Page." Then Anne brings wine out of doors to them; though her father, with the genuine feeling of old English hospitality, presses them to come into his house, and enjoy it with a "hot venison pasty to dinner." And she afterwards comes out into the garden to bid Master Slender to table, where, we may imagine, he has been lounging about, in the hope of the fresh air relieving his sheepish embarrassment. When Doctor Caius bids his servant bring him his rapier, he answers: "'Tis ready, sir, here in the porch"—conveying the idea of a room leading at once into the open air—such a room as used to be called "a summer parlour." Then we hear of Anne Page being at a "farmhouse

a-feasting;” and we have Mrs. Page leading her little boy William to school; and Sir Hugh Evans sees people coming “from Frogmore over the stile this way;” and we find that Master Ford “is this morning gone a-birding.” Even the very headings to the scenes breathe of dear lovely English scenery—“Windsor Park”—“A field near Frogmore.” They talk, too, of Datchet Lane; and Sir John Falstaff is “sighted into the river.” And, with this, come thronging visions of the “silver Thames,” and some of those exquisite leafy nooks on its banks, with the cawing of rooks; and its little islands, crowned with the dark and glossy-leaved alder; and barges lapsing on its tranquil tide. To crown all, the story winds up with a plot to meet in Windsor Park at midnight, to trick the fat knight beneath “Herne’s Oak.” The whole play, indeed, is, as it were, a village, or even a homestead pastoral.

The *dramatis personæ*, too, perfectly harmonise, and are in strict keeping with the scene. They are redolent of health and good humour—that moral and physical “sunshine.”

There are the two “Merry Wives” themselves. What a picture we have of buxom, laughing, ripe beauty! ready for any frolic “that may not sully the chariness of their honesty.” That jealous-pate, Ford, ought to have been sure of his wife’s integrity and goodness, from her being so transparent-tempered and cheerful. . . .

Then, there is Page, the very personification of hearty English hospitality. You feel the tight grasp of his hand, and see the honest sparkle of his eye, as he leads in the wranglers with, “Come, gentlemen, I hope we shall drink down all unkindness.” If I were required to point to the portrait of a genuine, indigenous Englishman throughout the whole of the works of Shakespeare, Page would be the man. Every thought of his heart, every motion of his body, appears to be the result of pure instinct; he has nothing exotic or artificial about him. He possesses strong yeoman sense, an unmistakable speech, a trusting nature, and a fearless deportment; and these are the characteristics of a true Englishman. He is to be gulled—no man more so; and he is gulled every day in the year—no proof, you will say, of his “true yeoman sense;” but an Englishman is quite as frequently gulled with his eyes open as when they are hookwinked. He has a conceit of being indifferent to chicanery. He confides in his own strength when it behoves him to exert it; and then he abates the nuisance. . . .

“Mine Host of the Garter” is one of the most original characters in the play. He is imbued with an eccentric fancy, and has the richest humour for a joke or a hoax. Moreover, mine host is the prince of good fellows. He feels perfectly easy whether Falstaff pays him “ten pounds a week” or two; and he good-naturedly takes his “withered serving-man” (Bardolph) “for a fresh tapster.” His self-conceit in his own skill and management is delicious:—“Am I politic? am I subtle? am I Machiavel?” And again, “The Germans shall have my horses; but I’ll make them pay—I’ll sauce them.” But he loses his horses, and then his “mind is heavy”—the last thing we should expect from



him. We do not, therefore, regret that his loss is made up in the "hundred pounds in gold" promised him by Fenton. There is no malice in mine host's "waggery;" and he manages the quarrel between Sir Hugh Evans, the parson, and Dr. Caius in the best spirit imaginable. . . .

All who have intercourse with the world can testify that the character of Master Slender is by no means an anomaly. The love-scene between him and Mistress Anne is a notable display of broad humour; and what a thought it was to make him ask his man Simple for his book of sonnets and love-songs to woo with! for he has not a word of his own to throw to a dog; and a pretty girl frightens him out of his little senses. When he first sees her, he says in a faint fluster, "O heaven! this is Mistress Anne Page!" And when dragged to the wooing-stake, like a lugged bear, by his cousin Shallow, we hear him yearning, "I had rather than forty shillings. I had my book of songs and sonnets here." In default of this, his book of riddles might serve. Riddles to make love with! But the book of riddles he had lent to Alice Shortcake a week before "Hallowmas." So the poor soul stands gasping, like a stranded grampus. And when left alone in wretchedness with her, her very first question flabbergasts him. If she had not led off, he would have stood there till now. . . .

Pretty little Anne Page, who contributes no small portion of the "sunshine" in this delightful comedy, is not so deeply and anxiously enamoured of Master Fenton, but that she can afford to trifle and amuse herself with the single-speech courtship of Slender; and her very protestation against the suit of the Frenchman has in it such a spice of humour as makes one fall head-and-ears in love with her.

"Good mother, do not marry me to yond' fool! (Slender).

"Mrs. Page. I mean it not; I seek you a better husband.

"Mrs. Quick. That's my master, Master Doctor.

"Anne. Alas! I had rather be set quick in the earth, and bowled to death with turnips."

But although a "subordinate character," how very important a person in this play is Mistress Quickly, the housekeeper to Dr. Caius; or, as Sir Hugh designates her, "his nurse, or his dry-nurse, or his cook, or his laundry, his washer, or his wringer." What a perfect specimen she is of a fussy, busy-bodying old woman! "That foolish carrion, Mrs. Quickly," as Mrs. Page calls her; making her necessary to all, by reason of her fussiness; and conspicuous, by reason of her folly. A large family,—the race of the Quicklies! Our Mrs. Quickly, the type of the whole breed, meddles and "treplots" in every one's affairs: with the seriousness and sincere dealing of a diplomatist, she acts the go-between for Falstaff with the two merry wives; she courts Anne Page for her master, undertaking the same office for Slender. She favours the suit of Fenton; and if the Welsh parson had turned an eye of favour upon the yeoman's pretty daughter, she would have played the

hymeneal Hebe to him too. Her whole character for mere busy-bodying, and not from any active kindness of heart,—for they who are sweet to all alike have no principle worth a button ;—her whole character is comprised in that one little speech in the 4th scene of the 3rd Act, when Fenton gives her the ring for his “sweet Nan.”

CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE.—*Shakespeare Characters*, pp. 141—160.

### SHAKESPEARE'S PROSE.<sup>1</sup>

VERSE differs from prose in being, in the broadest sense of the word, musical or harmonious. It is, therefore, the natural form of expression for emotion. Wherever a scene is occupied with mere ideas, it is in prose ; changing to verse, if at all, where the ideas merge into feelings. On the other hand, any entire play or any detached scene which is full of intense feeling is in verse ; changing to prose only where emotions give way to ideas, whether logical, practical, or jocular. Again, verse, and especially the so-called blank-verse, is essentially orderly and coherent. It is, therefore, fitted to express only emotion which is under control of the reason. Whenever it passes beyond, into frenzy or madness, it must cease to express itself in regular verse, just as music has no voice for passion that has broken its banks and become a destroying deluge. That can only find (or fail in seeking to find) utterance in unmusical wailing or screams. Rhythmic harmony of any high sort, whether that of Beethoven or that of Shakspeare, is majestic and noble, like the orderly sweep of planets in their spheres, “still quiring to the young-eyed cherubim.” It can only well express, therefore, feeling that is noble, or that at least through its power has some element of nobility, or thought that is deep and strong enough to carry feeling with it. Clowns, and jesters, and drunken men, and the trivial business of every-day life, get expressed in prose. So does wit, however refined. So does pleasure, unless it be the deep joy of love or death, that lies so close to pain.

Doubtless prose scenes are often thrown into the drama for the sake of relieving the strain on the feelings which the tragical action or passion has caused. The capacity for deep feeling must be renewed at intervals by breathing-spaces of a lighter tone. But the nature of the scene is what is chosen for this purpose, not the prose or verse form of its expression ; this is always self-determined, and never open to choice.

PROFESSOR E. R. SILL (*California*).—*Overland Monthly*, June, 1875.  
“*Shakespeare's Prose.*”

<sup>1</sup> *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is written almost wholly in prose. It contains only 296 lines

of verse, including both rhymed lines and blank verse.





*W. B. Bacon del.*

*W. B. Bacon sc.*

*Viel Lärmen um Nichts*

*Much ado about nothing.*

MUCH ADO ABOUT  
NOTHING.

## ACT II.

## SCENE III. LEONATO'S Orchard.

BENEDICK *left alone.*

*Benedick.* [Coming forward.] This can be no trick : the conference was sadly borne. They have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady : it seems her affections have their full bent. Love me ! why, it must be required. I hear how I am censured : they say I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her ; they say too that she will rather die than give any sign of affection. I did never think to marry : I must not seem proud : happy are they that hear their detractions and can put them to mending. They say the lady is fair ; 'tis a truth, I can bear them witness ; and virtuous ; 'tis so, I cannot reprove it ; and wise, but for loving me ; by my troth, it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her. I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have rail'd so long against marriage : but doth not the appetite alter ? a man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his

age. Shall quips and sentences and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humour ? No, the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married. Here comes Beatrice. By this day ! she's a fair lady : I do spy some marks of love in her.

*Enter* BEATRICE.

*Beat.* Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

*Bene.* Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

*Beat.* I took no more pains for those thanks than you take pains to thank me : if it had been painful, I would not have come.

*Bene.* You take pleasure then in the message ?

*Beat.* Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife's point and choke a daw withal. You have no stomach, signior : fare you well.

[*Exit.*]

*Bene.* Ha ! 'Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner ;' there's a double meaning in that. 'I took no more pains for those thanks than you took pains to thank me ;' that's as much as to say, Any pains that I take for you is as easy as thanks. If I do not take pity of her, I am a villain ; if I do not love her, I am a Jew. I will go get her picture. [*Exit.*]

## CHARACTER OF BEATRICE.

I NEVER knew anyone object to the nature and conduct of Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, who was not either dull in faculty, ill-tempered, or an overweening assertor of the exclusive privileges of the male sex. . . . She is warm-hearted, generous ; has a noble contempt of baseness of every kind ; is wholly untinged by jealousy ; is the first to break out into invective when her cousin Hero is treated in that scoundrel manner by her affianced husband at the very altar, and even makes it a *sine quâ non* with Benedick to prove his love for herself by challenging the traducer of her cousin. . . .

. . . . Beatrice is not without consciousness of her power of wit ; but it is rather the delight that she takes in something that is an effluence of her own glad nature, than for any pride of display. She enjoys its exercise, too, as a means of playful despotism over one whom she secretly admires, while openly tormenting. Her first inquiries after Benedick show the sort

of interest she takes in him ; and it is none the less for its being veiled in a scoffing style ; while what she says of their mutual wit-encounters proves the glory she has in out-taunting him. When her uncle observes to the messenger, in reply to one of her sarcasms, "There is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her ; they never meet, but there is a skirmish of wit between them ;" she replies—

"Alas ! he gets nothing by that. In our last conflict four of his five wits went halting off, and now the whole man is governed by one ; so that if he have wit enough to keep himself warm, let him bear it for a difference between himself and his horse ; for it is all the wealth he hath left to be known for a reasonable creature."

She is suspiciously anxious to point her disdain of him ; for when the Messenger remarks, "I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books," she retorts, "No ; an he were, I would burn my study." Her native hilarity of heart is evidenced constantly, and in the most attractive manner ; for it serves to make the blaze of her intellect show itself as originating in a secret blitheness of temperament. The prince, Don Pedro, says, "In faith, lady, you have a merry heart ;" to which she replies, "Yea, my lord, I thank it, poor fool, it keeps on the windy side of care." And when following this up by some smart banter, she gracefully checks herself, "But I beseech your grace, pardon me ; I was born to speak all mirth and no matter ;" he rejoins, "Your silence most offends me ; and to be merry most becomes you ; for out of question you were born in a merry hour." Whereto she answers, "No, sure, my lord, my mother cried ; but then there was a star danced, and under that I was born." Well may the prince remark after she has gone out, "By my troth, a pleasant-spirited lady !" To which her uncle, Leonato, replies :—

"There's little of the melancholy element in her, my lord ; she is never sad but when she sleeps ; and not ever sad then ; for I have heard my daughter say she hath often dreamed of unhappiness, and waked herself with laughing."

The fact is, like many high-spirited women, Beatrice possesses a fund of hidden tenderness beneath her exterior gaiety and sarcasm,—none the less profound from being withheld from casual view, and very seldom allowed to betray itself. As proofs of this, witness her affection for her uncle, Leonato, and his strong esteem and love for her,—her passionate attachment to her cousin Hero, and the occasional, but extremely significant, betrayals of her partiality for Benedick ; her very seeking out opportunities to torment him being one proof (especially in a woman of her disposition and breeding) of her preference ; for women do not banter a man they dislike,—they mentally send him to Coventry, and do not lift him into importance by offering an objection, still less a repartee or a sarcasm. The only time we see Beatrice alone, and giving utterance to the thoughts of her heart—that is, in soliloquy, which is the dramatic medium of representing

self-communion—her words are full of warm and feminine tenderness ; words that probably would not seem so pregnant of love-import, coming from another woman, more prone to express such feeling ; but from Beatrice, meaning much. It is the very transcript of an honest and candid heart. Then the poet has given her so potent an antagonist in her wit-fencing, that her skill is saved from being thought unbecoming. Benedick's wit is so polished, so manly, so competent, that her womanhood is spared the disgrace of bearing away the palm in their keen encounters. He always remains victor ; for we feel that he voluntarily refrains from claiming the conquest he achieves ; and he is ever master of the field, though his chivalrous gallantry chooses to leave her in possession of the ground—that "ground" so dear to female heart, "the last word." Benedick is a perfect gentleman, and his wit partakes of his nature ; it is forbearing in proportion to its excellence. One of the causes which render Benedick's wit more delightful than that of Beatrice is, that it knows when to cease. Like a true woman (don't "condemn me to everlasting redemption," ladies !), Beatrice is apt to pursue her advantage, when she feels she has one, to the very utmost. She does not give her antagonist a chance ; and if she could upset him, she would pink him when he was down : now, Benedick, with the generosity of superior strength, gives way first . . . . Benedick, being a man of acknowledged wit, as well as of a blithe temperament, has no fancy to be considered a jester—a professed "jester." His brilliant faculties render him a favourite associate of the prince ; but his various higher qualities, as a gentleman and a scholar, give him better claims to liking than those of a gay companion only. It is this that makes Beatrice's calling him the "prince's jester" so intolerable a gibe. She knew it, the hussy ! with her woman's shrewdness in finding out precisely what will most gall the man she prefers ; and he shows that it touches him to the quick by reverting to it in soliloquy, and repeating it again to his friends when they come in. A man of lively humour who is excited by his native gaiety of heart to entertain his friends by his pleasantry, at the same time feeling within himself that he possesses yet stronger and worthier grounds for their partiality, has a peculiarly sensitive dread of being taken for a mere jester or buffoon. ¶ Benedick's buoyancy of spirit is no effect of levity or frivolity. His humour has depth of feeling as well as mirth in it. His wit has force and geniality, no less than intellectual vivacity. That little sentence, with all its sportive ease, is instinct with moral sound sense—"Happy are they that hear their detractions and can put them to mending." Benedick's wit has penetration and discernment in it. With all his mercurial temperament, too, yet in a grave question this fine character can deliver himself with gravity and a noble sedateness ; as where he says, "In a false quarrel there is no true valour." And throughout the challenge scene he expresses himself with gentlemanly dignity and manly feeling ; while we find, from the remarks of the prince upon his change of colour, that he is as deeply hurt as he has temperately spoken. He characterizes

his own wit, in its gentleness and gallantry towards women, when he says to Beatrice's attendant, "A most manly wit, Margaret; it will not hurt a woman." There is heart in Benedick's playfulness. His love-making, when he is love-taken, is as earnest as it is animated. That is a fine and fervent bit of his wooing-scene with Beatrice, where she asks him if he will go with her to her uncle Leonato's to hear the news, he answers, "I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thine eyes, and moreover, I will go with thee to thine uncle's." Shakespeare has, with lustrous perfection, vindicated the sound sense and sweet heart that may accompany wit, in the character of Benedick.

CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE.—*Shakespeare Characters*, pp. 295—304.

#### ERRORS MADE IN STUDYING THE PLAY.

AMONGST all the dramatic characters of Shakespeare, there are no two of which the development is more closely intertwined than that of the personages most prominent in the drama now before us. This development, let us also observe, is, in fact, the main subject of the piece. We find it the more necessary to indicate this emphatically at the outset, because Hazlitt, Campbell, and others, in their critical notices of this play, have mistakenly represented the dramatic use here made of Beatrice and Benedick as merely subordinate to the interest which attaches to the nuptial fortunes of Hero. Coleridge, on the contrary, seeing ever more truly and deeply into the inmost spirit of Shakespeare's dramatic art, instances this very piece as illustrating that "independence of the dramatic interest on the plot," which he enumerates among those characteristics by which, he says, it seems to him that Shakespeare's plays are "distinguished from those of all other dramatic poets." "The interest of the plot," he continues, "is always, in fact, on account of the characters, not *vice versa* as in almost all other writers; the plot is a mere canvas and no more. Hence arises the true justification of the same stratagem being used in regard to Benedick and Beatrice, the vanity in each being alike. Take away from the *Much Ado About Nothing* all that which is not indispensable to the plot, either as having little to do with it, or, at best, like Dogberry and his comrades, forced into the service, when any other less ingeniously absurd watchmen and night-constables would have answered the mere necessities of the action; take away Benedick, Beatrice, Dogberry, and the reaction of the former on the character of Hero—and what will remain? In other writers the main agent of the plot is always the prominent character; in Shakespeare it is so, or is not so, as the character is in itself calculated to form the plot. Don John is the mainspring of this plot of the play, but he is merely shown and then withdrawn."

A little more attention to this view of the matter might have saved more than one



critic from pronouncing some notable misjudgments upon this piece, and especially as regards the character of Beatrice. Campbell, for instance, might have deliberated longer before he declared her, in one emphatic word, to be "an odious woman." Hazlitt might have hesitated even to tell us that she "turns all things into ridicule, and is proof against everything serious." And Mrs. Jameson, while admitting, as she does, the strong intellect and generous feeling that characterize this heroine, might have been led to see that they are something more than the merely *secondary* constituents in her dramatic being. Indeed, when we are told respecting any leading female character of Shakespeare, that, upon the whole, wit and wilfulness predominate in it over intellect and feeling, we may fairly suspect that such critic's view of that character is distorted or imperfect. Yet more, when we are told that, in a Shakespearian drama of which prosperous love is the principal subject, the heroine is nothing less than an *odious* personage, we may pretty safely reject the allegation altogether.

The first critical oversight, then, which has commonly been committed in examining this play, has been the not perceiving that the complete unfolding of the characters of Beatrice and her lover forms the capital business of the piece. The second error, involving such strange misconceptions respecting the heroine in particular, has been the overlooking or disregarding that close affinity which the dramatist has established between the two characters, rendering them, as far as the difference of sex will permit, so nearly each other's counterpart, that any argument that shall prove odiousness in the one, must of inevitable necessity demonstrate it in the other. Consequent on these is the third and most important error of all in estimating the predominant spirit of this drama. Its critics have overlooked entirely the art with which the dramatist has contrived and used the incidents of the piece in such manner as to bring out, by distinct and natural gradations, the profound seriousness which lies beneath all the superficial levity seen at first in the true hero and heroine,—until the very pair who have given the most decidedly comic character to the outset of the play, are found on the point of giving it the most tragic turn towards its close.

GEORGE FLETCHER.—*Studies of Shakespeare*, (1847) pp. 241—243.

## THE TRAGEDY AND COMEDY OF SHAKESPEARE.

THE drama, like every other form of art, seeks to reproduce the finest or the most expressive forms of Nature. It finds overwhelming suffering and anguish at one extremity of human life, and at another light mirth or whimsical extravagance; and it embodies in Tragedy and in Comedy these two most striking conditions of our changeful existence.

Tragedy appeals to that intense sympathy which is the widest element in the life of

humanity. In developing the larger passions of our nature it insensibly softens and subdues our lower and more selfish instincts. The awe which it inspires is solemn and refining; it is no mere helpless terror, but a profound sense of the invisible affinities which bind together the whole sentient universe. "We have one human heart, all mortal thoughts confess a common home."

Comedy is of a more remote and a more complex origin. Its essential spirit is well expressed in our English word "humour;" and humour is the unreasoning and capricious expression of our sense of the inexplicable contradictions of our own nature. Its source seems to lie in the deep conviction which we entertain of the littleness and the falsehood of all continuous and absorbing abstraction. The comic helps to restore us to the truth and freedom of nature; it redresses the folly and the extravagance which all sustained earnestness sooner or later engenders. We are complex beings, and we cannot in any single mood express that complexity.

Humour, however, is singularly limited in the range of its influence. In its largest form it is essentially unfeminine. It is a defiant sense of our own isolation and our own impotence; and there is no strongly defiant element in the nature of woman. She has not the vices which would require this corrective. There is in humour a whim, an audacity, a recklessness, which are incompatible with her tranquil truthfulness, her guarded refinement, her resigned humility. In many men, and even in many great poets, it is almost equally unknown; but these are men of specially fastidious tastes, or men of confined natures growing in one particular direction. We do not, however, it must be admitted, associate humour with our conceptions of higher and purer intelligences. We find no trace of it on the face of external Nature itself. It is never reflected from the mountain, or the plain, or the ocean, from the star or the flower. It is man's special expression of his own special incongruity in the universe; but being essentially human, we naturally conclude that those are the largest and the most complete men who, without any consequent limitation of other faculties, possess it in the readiest and the most unmeasured abundance.

The genius of Shakespeare was displayed with equal force and equal freedom in the highest tragedy and the highest comedy. He was the only man that ever attempted, in any large measure, to reproduce these two extreme manifestations of human passion, and in each of them he possesses the same unconfined power over all their changeable phenomena. His comedy, however, seems to have been usually with him the result of a more personal mood, and it is often, on that very account, the result of a weaker mood. . . . We think it very probable, however, that there were also many occasions in which he was disposed to exercise even his freer and larger fancy in comedy rather than in tragedy. There is in all strong emotion a self-display which men of bright, unaffected temperament instinctively avoid, except under the pressure of some very exceptional

influences. In communing with the world at large, our first impulse is to meet life with an air of light, cheerful carelessness; we seek to exhibit under this playful disguise our personal unobtrusiveness; and we shrink from appearing in that deepest and most serious mood which is also of necessity our most personal and most solitary mood.

But whatever may have been Shakespeare's personal taste for comedy in his less impassioned moments, there seems to be no reason to doubt that he found in tragedy the most complete expression of his highest genius. The comedy was principally the work of the earlier period of his dramatic career, while all his greatest tragedies were produced in the maturity and the very plenitude of his powers. In tragedy he had to trust more exclusively to the force of his own imaginative insight; he was less tempted to appeal to the accidental tastes of his contemporaries; and his work was naturally more sustained and more harmonious. There are no long series of scenes in his comedy in which his genius shines with the same unchanging lustre as in all the concluding portions of *King Lear* and *Othello*. Tragedy, too, is, after all, the loftiest manifestation of passion, and it necessarily furnishes the grandest subject for the exercise of poetical inspiration. We have not only a higher life, but we think we have also a larger and more varied life in the tragedy than in the comedy of Shakespeare; and the tragedy thus becomes a grander creation. Tragedy, too, has essentially a deeper and a more abiding reality than comedy. It seems to be less an accident and an exception in the universe. Our final conception of all life is profoundly and steadfastly earnest. The extremity even of joy "is serious; and the sweet gravity of the highest kind of poetry is ever on the face of Nature itself."

The tragedy of Shakespeare embraces nearly all his greatest works. It is the general form which the passion assumes in *Hamlet*, and *King Lear*, and *Othello*, and *Macbeth*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Julius Caesar*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*, and throughout the whole series of his historical dramas. All those great productions are perpetually representing life under its more agitated aspects; and their tragic interest is the poet's most direct revelation of the enduring and inevitable conditions of existence. It is the image of Destiny bending, through the presence of external influences, the heart of humanity.

His comedy is necessarily a lighter and, in some sense, a more personal creation. In it he could more readily indulge the caprices of his own fancy; he was more master of the moods and the incidents which it reproduced; and it thus serves to establish something more like a direct relation between him and his readers. But he never, in his larger and more imaginative moments, obtrudes upon us his own individuality; and it is in his finest comic, as in his finest tragic compositions, that he most escapes from the narrow restraints of accidental tastes or predilections into the free region of universal life.

THOMAS KENNY.—*The Life and Genius of Shakespeare* (1864), pp. 142—145.

## AS YOU LIKE IT.

## ACT I.

SCENE II. *Lawn before the Duke's palace.*

ORLANDO, CELIA, and ROSALIND.

*Rosalind.* My father loved Sir Rowland as his soul,

And all the world was of my father's mind :  
 Had I before known this young man his son,  
 I should have given him tears unto entreaties,  
 Ere he should thus have ventur'd.

*Celia.* Gentle cousin,  
 Let us go thank him and encourage him :  
 My father's rough and envious disposition  
 Sticks me at heart. Sir, you have well deserved :  
 If you do keep your promises in love  
 But justly, as you have exceeded all promise,  
 Your mistress shall be happy.

*Ros.* Gentleman,  
 [*Giving him a chain from her neck.*]  
 Wear this for me, one out of suits with fortune,

That could give more, but that her hand lacks  
 means.

Shall we go, coz ?

*Cel.* Ay. Fare you well, fair gentleman.*Orlando.* Can I not say, I thank you ? My better parts

Are all thrown down, and that which here stands  
 up

Is but a quintain, a mere lifeless block.

*Ros.* He calls us back : my pride fell with my fortunes ;

I'll ask him what he would. Did you call, sir ?

Sir, you have wrestled well and overthrown

More than your enemies.

*Cel.* Will you go, coz ?*Ros.* Have with you. Fare you well.[*Exeunt Rosalind and Celia.*]*Orl.* What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue ?

I cannot speak to ner, yet she urged conference.

O poor Orlando, thou art overthrown !

Or Charles or something weaker masters thee.

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN.

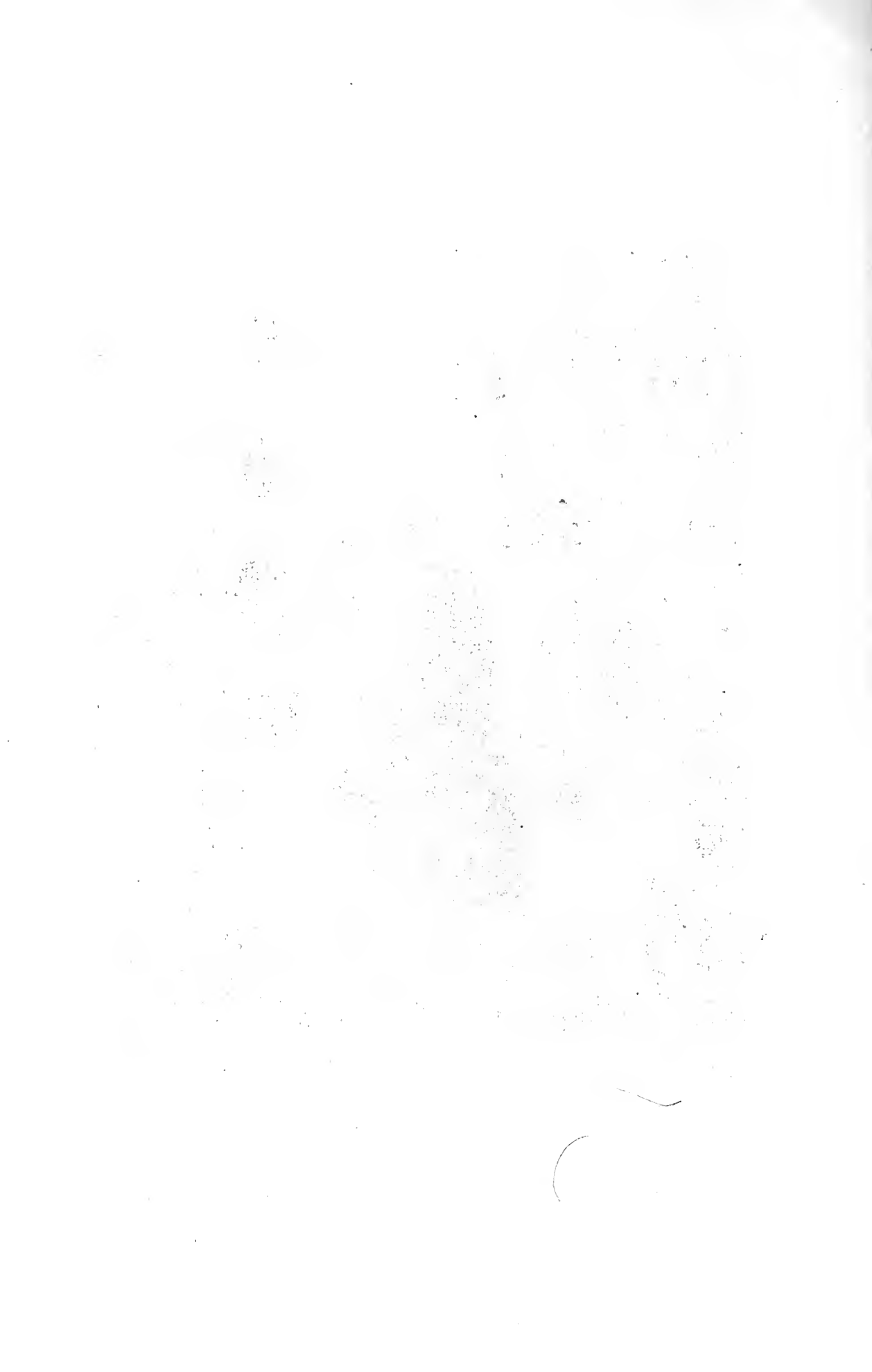
NOTHING can exceed the mastery with which Shakespeare, without any obtrusive or undramatic description, transports the imagination to the sunny glades and massy shadows of umbrageous Arden. The leaves rustle and glisten, the brooks murmur unseen in the copses, the flowers enamel the savannahs, the sheep wander on the distant hills, the deer glance by and hide themselves in the thickets, and the sheepcotes sprinkle the far landscape all spontaneously, without being shown off or talked about. You hear the song of the birds, the belling of the stags, the bleating of the flocks, and a thousand sylvan, pastoral sounds beside, blent with the soft plaints and pleasant ambiguities of the lovers, the sententious satire of Jacques, and the courtly fooling of Touchstone, without being told to listen to them. Shakespeare does all that the most pictorial dramatist could do, without ever sinking the dramatist in the landscape painter. The exuberant descriptions of some recent authors are little more dramatic than the voluminous stage directions in translated German melodramas. I know not what share the absence of painted scenes might have in preserving our old dramatists from this excess, but I believe that the low state of estimation of landscape painting had a good deal



H. Schwaner del.

A. Babel sc.

*Wie es euch gefällt - As you like it.*



to do with it. Luxurious description characterises the second childhood of poetry. In its last stage it begins, like Falstaff, to babble of green fields.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.—*Essays and Marginalia* (1851), Vol. II. pp. 141—142.

## ROSALIND AND ORLANDO.

THE business of *As You Like It* is chiefly to

“ Dally with the innocence of love,  
Like the old age.”

It is especially the play of youthful courtship between two beings of ideal beauty and excellence, in whom the sympathetic part of love predominates over the selfish—affection over passion. No wonder, then, that Shakespeare, so alive to the superior generosity and delicacy of affection in the feminine breast, should have made the heroine of this piece its most conspicuous personage,—to the full and various development of whose moral qualities as well as her peculiar personal and intellectual attractions, all else in the drama is subservient or subordinate. . . . Of all the sweet feminine names compounded from *Rosa*, that of *Rosa-linda* seems to be the most elegant, and therefore most befitting that particular character of ideal beauty which the dramatist here assigns to his imaginary princess. . . . The analogy will at once be seen, which the image of the graceful rose bears to the exquisite spirit of Rosalind, no less than to her buoyant figure in all its blooming charms. Orlando's verses on the subject are not a lover's idealization of some real-life charmer—they but describe the dramatist's own ideal conception. . . . “Cleopatra's majesty” recalls to us the tallness of figure which the dramatist has made an essential characteristic of this personage—with a view, amongst other things, to that peculiar male disguise which he designed her to assume, and under which he seems to have intended that she should exhibit to us a complete impersonation of the inmost soul, the most ethereal and exquisite spirit of the piece—that blended deal of the forest and pastoral life, which lends to this drama so original and peculiar a charm. To her cousin's proposal that, for security in their wanderings, they shall put themselves in mean attire, and discolour their faces, Rosalind replies:—

“ Were it not better,  
*Because that I am more than common tall,*  
That I did suit me all points like a man?  
A gallant curtle-axe upon my thigh,  
A boar-spear in my hand : and (in my heart  
Lie there what hidden woman's fear there will)

We'll have a swashing and a martial outside ;  
As many other mannish cowards have,  
That do outface it with their semblances."

The manner in which more than one of her modern representatives on the stage have demeaned themselves under this habit would justify Shakespeare's Rosalind in saying to them, as she does on one occasion to her friend Celia, "Dost thou think, though I am caparisoned like a man, that I have a doublet and hose in my disposition?" No indeed; it is a precisely opposite cause, her peculiarly feminine apprehensiveness, that stimulates the ready invention which is her predominant intellectual characteristic, to propose the expedient in question. It is not her affectionate and clear-headed cousin, but herself that starts the timid objection to the going in quest of her banished father—

"Alas, what danger will it be to us,  
Maids as we are, to travel forth so far!  
Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold."

Hereupon her friend simply suggests—

"I'll put myself in poor and mean attire,  
And with a kind of umber smirch my face;  
The like do you; so shall we pass along,  
And never stir assailants."

This, however, is merely the negative defence, of rendering themselves unattractive. But the ready wit of Rosalind supplies her with the thought of adding to this means of safety a positive deterrent, by arraying her tall figure in "a swashing and a martial outside," which would have sat ill upon the low stature of Celia; besides Rosalind must at once have perceived that the appearance of a female companion by her side would make her own disguise less liable to suspicion. . . . So much for the spirit in which the heroine herself assumes this garb—a spirit as devoid of mere feminine vanity, as it is of unfeminine boldness; although the dramatist now permits her, in justly conscious beauty, to name herself after the cupbearer of the gods, in that same strain of fond idealization which makes him combine, in her proper feminine aspect, the exquisite feature of a Helen, the noble grace of a Cleopatra, and the buoyant step of an Atalanta:—

"I'll have no worse a name than Jove's own page,  
And therefore look you call me Ganymede."

Until her first meeting with Orlando in the forest she no more seeks than Imogen does to make any display of her masculine part—she simply endures it. In love as she is, even



before assuming it, she may well find it uncongenial. And when first assured that Orlando is in their neighbourhood, all the woman rushes back upon her heart and mind : "Alas the day ! What shall I do with my doublet and hose ?" So soon, however, as Orlando comes actually into her presence, her quick apprehension fails not to discover that these same doublet and hose afford her the best facility for ascertaining the point which now engrosses all her solicitude—whether the noble youth on whom she has fixed her affections, loves her as truly in return. . . . Among the higher male personages of the piece, Orlando bears the most poetical name ; while his character, we see, has been studiously compounded, so as to adapt it peculiarly for conceiving a passion highly imaginative, but no less affectionate. We find it summed up in two remarkable passages, on the joint testimony of the two persons of the drama who have known him the most—the man who most hates him, and the man who most loved him—his elder brother Oliver, and his father's old servant Adam. The evidence of the former, in his soliloquy at the end of the opening scene, is rendered peculiarly emphatic by those preceding words, "I hope I shall see an end of him ; for my soul, yet I know not why, hates nothing more than he ;"—"Yet," continues Oliver, "he's gentle ; never schooled, and yet learned ; full of noble device ; of all sorts enchantingly beloved ; and indeed, so much in the heart of the world, and especially of my own people, who best know him, that I am altogether misprised." After this, we may well accept as unexaggerated those expressions of the affectionate old man, which bear witness to the like effect—

" O my gentle master,  
 O my sweet master, O you memory  
 Of old Sir Rowland ! why what make you here ?  
 Why are you virtuous ? Why do people love you ?  
 And wherefore are you gentle, strong, and valiant ?  
 . . . . .  
 Know you not, master, to some kind of men  
 Their graces serve them but as enemies ?  
 No more do yours ; your virtues, gentle master,  
 Are sanctified and holy traitors to you,  
 Oh, what a world is this, when what is comely  
 Envenoms him that bears it ! "

Observe, that in all this, it is the beauty of soul rather than of person that is dwelt upon as attracting every heart—though, "gentle, strong, and valiant," we cannot conceive of the person itself as otherwise than comely and graceful.

Consistently with this idea, we find that it is not mere vulgar admiration of a handsome youth performing a feat of bodily prowess, but an instant sympathy of soul, that thrills the heart of Rosalind on their first meeting. It is remarkable that, in the first instance, while Celia proposes to her cousin that they shall stay and see the wrestling, Rosalind,

pained by Le Beau's account of the three young men whom the wrestler has already disabled, shows her superior sensitiveness by her indisposition to remain: "Is there yet another dotes upon rib-breaking? Shall we see this wrestling, cousin?" But her first glance at the young stranger—"Is yonder the man?"—banishes her reluctance; and to her uncle's inquiry, whether her cousin and she are "crept hither to see the wrestling," she promptly answers for them both, "Ay, my liege; so please you give us leave;" and in like manner, she is the first to ask, "Young man, have you challenged Charles the wrestler?" The terms in which he declines the proffered intervention of the ladies to prevent his proceeding to the perilous encounter, are conceived by the dramatist with admirable fitness to deepen and fix the impression which the speaker has already made upon the sensitive and generous heart of Rosalind, by unconsciously touching that strong though tender chord of sympathy, the similarity of their adverse fortunes—

"I beseech you punish me not with your hard thoughts; wherein I confess me much guilty, to deny so fair and excellent ladies anything. But let your fair eyes, and gentle wishes, go with me to my trial; wherein if I be foiled, there is but one shamed that was never gracious; if killed, but one dead that is willing to be so. I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have none to lament me; the world no injury, for in it I have nothing; only in the world I fill up a place which may be better supplied when I have made it empty."

This modestly plaintive apology, when delivered in the pathetic melody of tone appropriate to the character, fully prepares us for the heroine's expressions of tremulous interest in his success, and for that silently fluttering exultation for his victory which it is left for the genius of the actress to supply. Then, to complete the conquest of this new passion over the heart of Rosalind, by a yet more intimate bond of compassionate sympathy, there come at once Orlando's disclosure of his parentage as the son of her father's bosom friend, and her usurping uncle's ungenerous treatment of him on that very account. She naturally exclaims—

"My father lov'd Sir Rowland as his soul,  
And all the world was of my father's mind:  
Had I before known this young man *his* son,  
I should have given him tears unto entreaties,  
Ere he should thus have ventur'd."

It is not, however, until her cousin has first addressed him—"Sir, you have well deserved," &c.—that Rosalind gives him the chain from her neck, saying—

"Gentleman,  
Wear this for me, one out of suits with fortune,  
That could give more, but that her hand lacks means.  
Shall we go, coz?"

He calls us back : my pride fell with my fortunes ;  
 I'll ask him what he would. Did you call, sir ?  
 Sir, you have wrestled well, and overthrown  
 More than your enemies."

On the other hand, the look and accents of the lovely wearer in giving the chain, seem at once to have taken full possession of Orlando's heart—

" Can I not say, I thank you," &c.

And when the two princesses have left him alone—

" What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue ?  
 I cannot speak to her, yet she urged conference.  
 O poor Orlando ! thou art overthrown !  
 Or Charles, or something weaker masters thee !"

And immediately, to fix the hold of this new passion on his sympathetic nature, and complete, in the auditor's contemplation, the bond of reciprocal affection between the generous-hearted lovers, comes in Le Beau, to tell Orlando, at once, of the usurping duke's malevolence against him,—of his daughter Celia's more than sisterly affection for her cousin Rosalind, and finally—

" That of late this duke,  
 Hath ta'en displeasure 'gainst his gentle niece ;  
 Grounded upon no other argument,  
 But that the people praise her for her virtues,  
 And pity her for her good father's sake ;  
 And, on my life, his malice 'gainst the lady  
 Will suddenly break forth."

This announcement, we say, strikes a deeper chord of sympathy in Orlando's breast, which vibrates in those concluding words of the scene—

" Thus must I from the smoke into the smother ;  
 From tyrant duke, unto a tyrant brother.—  
 But heavenly Rosalind !"

GEORGE FLETCHER.—*Studies of Shakespeare* (1847) pp. 199—208.

SHAKESPEARE'S CHOICE OF SUBJECTS.<sup>1</sup>

IN the choice of subjects particularly, as well as in other features, Shakespeare belongs to a school older than that of Fletcher, and radically different from it. The principle of the contrariety in the choice of subjects between the older and newer schools, is this :— The older poets usually prefer stories with which their audience must have been previously familiar ; the newer poets avoid such known subjects, and attempt to create an adventitious interest for their pieces, by appealing to the passion of curiosity, and feeding it with novelty of incident. The early writers may have adopted their rule of choice from a distrust in their own skill ; but they are more likely to have been influenced by reflecting on the inexperience of their audience in theatrical exhibitions. By insisting on this quality in their plots, they hampered themselves much in the choice of them ; and the subjects which offered themselves to the older among them, were mainly confined to two classes, history and the chivalrous tales being the only two cycles of story with which, about the time of Shakespeare's birth, any general familiarity could be presumed. That such were the favourite themes of the infant English drama is abundantly clear even from the lists of old lost dramas which have been preserved to us. By the time when Shakespeare stepped into the arena, the zeal for translation had increased the stock of popular knowledge by the addition of the classical fables and the foreign modern novels ; and his immediate precursors, some of whom were men of much learning, had especially availed themselves of the former class of plots. If, passing over Shakespeare, we glance at the plots of Fletcher, Johnson, or others of the same period, we find, among a great diversity of means, a search for novelty universally on foot. Johnson is fond of inventing his plots ; Beaumont and Fletcher usually borrow theirs ; but neither by the former nor the latter were stories chosen which were familiar to the people, nor in any instance, perhaps, do they condescend to use plots which had been previously written on. Where Beaumont and Fletcher do avail themselves of common tales, they artfully combine them with others, and receive assistance from complexity of adventure in keeping their uniform purpose in view. The historical drama was regarded by the new school as a rude and obsolete form ; and there are scarcely half a dozen instances in which any writer of that age, but Shakespeare, adopted it later than 1600. Historical subjects indeed wanted the coveted charm, as did also the Romantic and the Classical Tales, both of which shared in the neglect with which the Chronicles were treated. The Foreign Novels, and stories partly borrowed from them, or wholly invented, were almost the sole subjects of the newer drama, which has always the air of addressing itself to hearers

<sup>1</sup> *As You Like It* is founded upon Lodge's novel *Rosalynd* ; Euphuus' *Golden Legacie* ; and the

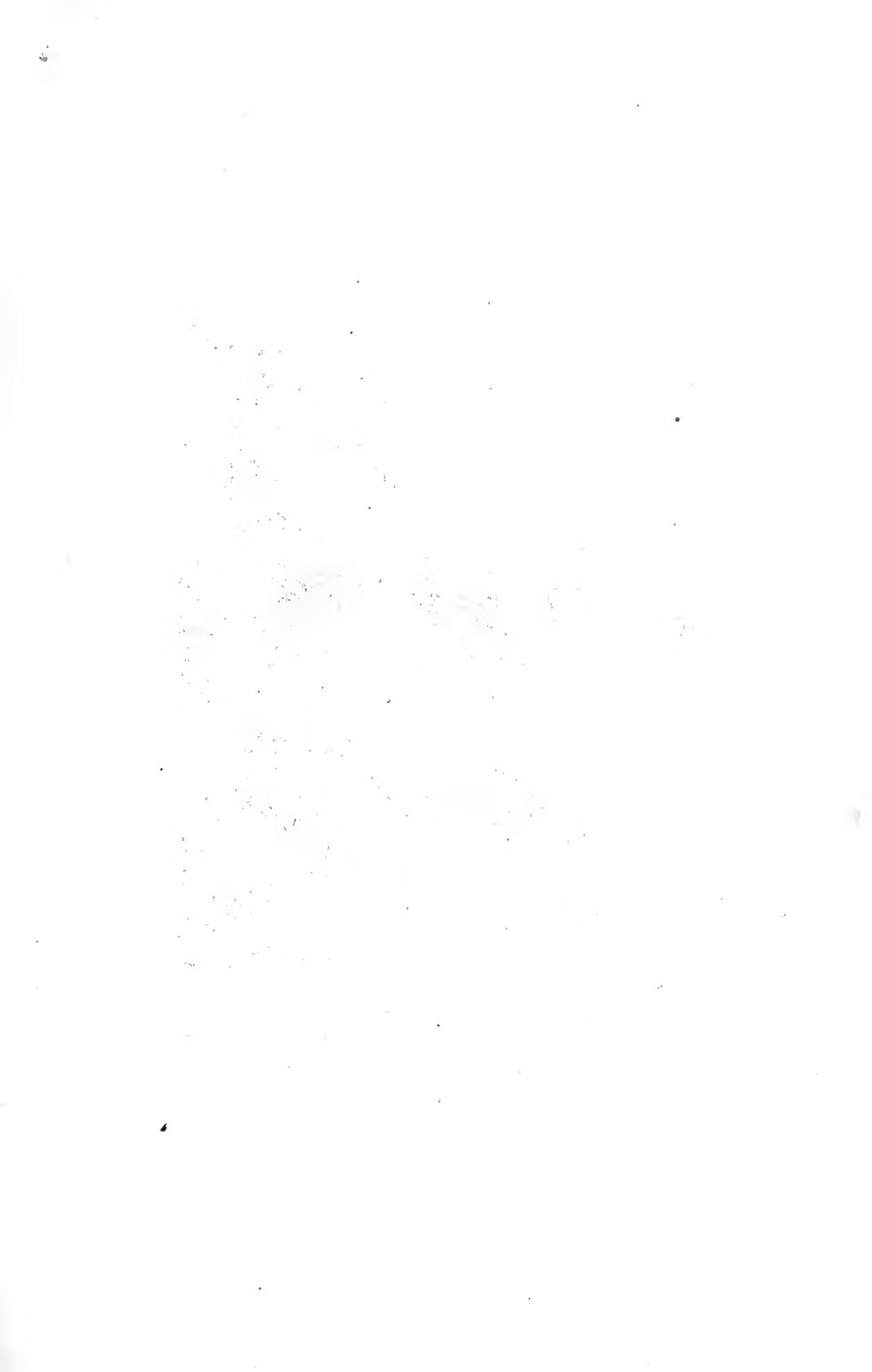
story had been told in the *Tale of Gamelyn*, erroneously ascribed to Chaucer.

possessing greater dramatic experience and more extended information than those who were in the view of the older writers.

Shakespeare, in point of time, stood between these two classes : does he decidedly belong to either, or show a leaning, and to which? He unequivocally belongs to the older class ; or rather, the opposition to the newer writers assumes in him a far more decided shape than in any of his immediate forerunners ; for in them are found numerous exceptions to the rule, in him scarcely one. He returns, in fact, to more than one of the principles of the old school, which had begun in his time to fall into disuse. The external form of some of his plays, particularly his histories, is quite in the old taste. The narrative chorus is the most observable remnant of antiquity ; and the long rhymed passages, frequent in his earlier works, are abundant in the older writers : Peele uses them through whole scenes, and Marlowe likewise to excess. His continual introduction of those conventional characters, his favourite jesters, is another point of resemblance to the ruder stage. And his choice of subjects, when combined with the peculiarities of economy just noticed, as well as others, clearly approximates to the school of Lodge, Greene, and those elder writers who have left few works and fewer names. His Historical Plays are the perfection of the old school, the only valuable specimens of that class which it has produced, and the latest instance in which its example was followed ; and he has had recourse to the classical story for such subjects as approached most nearly to the nature of his English Chronicles. And you must take especial note, that, even in the class of subjects in which he seems to coincide with the new school—I mean his plots borrowed from foreign novels—he assumes no more of conformity than its appearance, while the principle of contrariety is still retained. The new writers preferred untranslated novels, and, where they chose translated ones, disguised them till the features of the original were lost ; Shakespeare not only uses translated tales—(this indeed from necessity)—and closely adheres to their minutest circumstances, but in almost every instance he has made choice of those among them which can be proved to have been most widely known and esteemed at the time. Most of his plots founded on fanciful subjects, whether derived from novels or other sources, can be shown to have been previously familiar to the people. The story of *Measure for Measure* had been previously told ; that of *As You Like It* he might have had from either of two popular collections of tales ; the fable of *Much Ado About Nothing* seems to have been widely spread, and those of *All's Well that Ends Well*, and the *Winter's Tale* ; *Romeo and Juliet* appears in at least one collection of English novels, and in a poem which enjoyed much popularity. These are sufficient as examples ; but a still more remarkable circumstance is this. In repeated instances, about twelve in all, Shakespeare has chosen subjects on which plays had been previously written ; nay, more, on the subjects which he has so rewritten, he has produced some of his best dramas, and one his very masterpiece.

*Julius Cæsar* belongs to this list; *Lear* does so likewise; and *Hamlet*. Is not that a singular fact? . . . . But Shakespeare has often, oftener than once, applied to the chivalrous class of subjects, which was exclusively peculiar to the older school. Its tales indeed bore a strong likeness to his own most esteemed subjects of study; for, amidst all their extravagances and inconsistencies, the Gothic romances and poems, the older of them at all events, professed in form to be chronicles of fact, and in principle to assume historical truth as their groundwork. *Pericles* is founded on one of the most popular romances of the middle ages, which had been also versified by Gower, the second father of the English poetical school. The characters in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* are classical, but the costume is strictly Gothic, and shows that it was through the medium of romance that he drew the knowledge of them; and the *Troilus and Cressida* presents another classical and chivalrous subject which Chaucer had handled at great length, also invested with the richness of the romantic garb and decoration.

W. SPALDING.—*A Letter on Shakespeare's Authorship of "The Two Noble Kinsmen"* (1833), pp. 64—67.





Was ihr wollt - Twelfth - Night.



## TWELFTH NIGHT.

## ACT III.

## SCENE IV. OLIVIA'S Garden.

SIR TOBY BELCH *and* SIR ANDREW AGUE-CHEEK.

*Sir To.* Why, man, he's a very devil; I have not seen such a firago. I had a pass with him, rapier, scabbard and all, and he gives me the stuck in with such a mortal motion, that it is inevitable; and on the answer, he pays you as surely as your feet hit the ground they step on. They say he has been fencer to the Sophy.

*Sir And.* Pox on't, I'll not meddle with him.

*Sir To.* Ay, but he will not now be pacified: Fabian can scarce hold him yonder.

*Sir And.* Plague on't, an I thought he had been valiant and so cunning in fence, I'd have seen him damned ere I'd have challenged him. Let him let the matter slip, and I'll give him my horse, grey Capilet.

*Sir To.* I'll make the motion: stand here; make a good show on't: this shall end without the perdition of souls. [*Aside*] Marry, I'll ride your horse as well as I ride you.

*Re-enter FABIAN and VIOLA.*

[*To Fab.*] I have his horse to take up the quarrel: I have persuaded him the youth's a devil.

*Fab.* He is as horribly conceited of him; and pants and looks pale, as if a bear were at his heels.

*Sir To.* [*To Vio.*] There's no remedy, sir; he will fight with you for's oath sake: marry, he hath better bethought him of his quarrel, and he finds that now scarce to be worth talking of: therefore draw, for the supportance of his vow; he protests he will not hurt you.

*Vio.* [*Aside*] Pray God defend me! A little thing would make me tell them how much I lack of a man.

*Fab.* Give ground, if you see him furious.

*Sir To.* Come, Sir Andrew, there's no remedy; the gentleman will, for his honour's sake, have one bout with you; he cannot by the duello avoid it: but he has promised me, as he is a gentleman and a soldier, he will not hurt you. Come on; to't.

*Sir And.* Pray God, he keep his oath!

*Vio.* I do assure you, 'tis against my will.

[*They draw*]

## VIOLA.

VIOLA, fair and youthful, separated, as she fears for ever, from her twin-brother Sebastian in a shipwreck, is cast on the coast of Illyria, and assuming the costume of a page, takes service with the Duke Orsino. It is just intimated that the reputation of the Duke may already have so far touched her fancy, as to have made it one motive of her disguise to approach nearer to him. She is speedily in high favour, and as speedily enamoured of her master; but his discourses of love have the Lady Olivia for their theme, and to her he despatches Viola as an envoy. Loyally she performs her embassy, not without a reflection on the complication of her position, but never hinting at, never dreaming of, a thought to play false with the commission by retarding the suit, or by raising a prejudice where she is sent to conciliate love. In the same still spirit of candour and rectitude she feels pity for Olivia when entangled in a passion for herself, not unfeeling amusement, and not selfish malice at an additional obstacle to the passion of the Duke. For her own fate, her winning manners, reflective sentiment, ✓ and serene imagination, find their way, a way of their own, to his heart, and she seems ✓

✓ content to trust to the bias of nature for the remainder ; and at the most indulges in expressions which, should discovery arrive, must, whether she anticipates the result or not, expose to view the condition of her own affections. But her disguise has other consequences besides her day-dream of languishing enthusiasm, and though her light pinnacle is buoyant on the billows, it is grievously tossed and shaken when she has to abide collision with the boisterous characters of the comic portion of the play.

While Viola is trusting to, or hoping in, time and impression and the force of genuine sympathy to find a place in the heart of her lord, when all accidents consent, and while Olivia in passionate self-abandonment is wooing she knows not what, roguish conspirators are taking advantage of the self-conceit of a churlish steward, to possess him with a dream of greatness, and lure him into a monstrous self-exhibition, under the notion that he is beloved by his mistress. Not, however, entirely unavenged ; Sir Andrew Ague-cheek, one of his betrayers, is made a cat's-paw of a wooer by Sir Toby, and trips up over the heels of his own fatuous vanity as grossly as Malvolio ; while Maria, patient and hopeful as Viola, but more active in her strategy according to her nature and circumstances, lays siege to Sir Toby, who is fairly taken off his legs at last, after laughing his fill at Viola, Malvolio, and Sir Andrew, and captured, in all openness of heart, by mere congeniality of jest, by his niece's chambermaid.

Viola and Sir Andrew, cowards both, by right of sex or privilege of carpet knight-hood, yet each believing the other a very devil by backing up and suggestion of mischievous comrades, form a group which comprises the very essence and substance of the laughable ; and it is a companion picture to Olivia looking with eyes of wonder on Malvolio, who misapprehends her as much as he does himself.

It is in the last scene that all the embarrassments cross and culminate ; here the circuit is completed, and the shock and discharge of general explanation restores all to happy equilibrium. Time and favourable chance bring all round happily and easily, for all we are interested in, and only allow difficulties to become painful at the moment of indicating the way of escape. In this last scene, then, Viola is first exposed to the bitter charge of her brother's friend Antonio challenging recognition, then to that of the Duke for supplanting him with Olivia, then to the complaints of Olivia for beguiling her, followed by the exclamation of all when the priest confirms the statement ; and, lastly, by the incredible accusation of Sir Andrew and Sir Toby of breaking their heads ; and all these complicated knots thus brought into one space are cleared and divided at once by the simple entrance of Sebastian, to claim the faith which Olivia had pledged to him in happy mistake for his sister. The vagaries of Malvolio are as easily explained, and the spring of the dramatic action has then fairly run down. . . . Good fortune does not alight on Sebastian himself more unsolicited and unmanaged than on Viola. After her first exertion of will in assuming male dress, and this is readily ascribed to the exigence

of unprotected position, she simply allows herself to be carried along by the stream of time and events, which answer to her confidence by floating her at last to happiness. Enamoured of the Duke, she can no more than Rosalind, though in a more pensive spirit, deny herself the luxury of uttering her passion when secure that her expressions cannot be applied; but otherwise the loss of a brother rests on her heart as on Olivia's, and she has not yet recovered courage to attempt to steer her fate. She is simply face to face with grief, and conquers it by being able tranquilly to smile at it. She does her embassy to Olivia with candid directness, and is content to take the consequence of her loyalty. She sees quickly a probability that she is mistaken for her brother, yet she leaves this too for the course of events to bring to light; and even when the hasty speech of the Duke seems to threaten her destruction, she turns to meet her fate "jocund, apt, and willingly." Her conduct throughout is consistent with the character for which the type and key-note was given by the conditions of the embassy. Had her nature been more active, less contemplative, and less conscientious, she could not have undertaken to intercede with her rival, without making some use of her position to influence her own fortunes, and yet in what direction could she urge them, consistently with delicacy and honour? A stronger character would have been far more embarrassed; and thus the position creates the necessity for the only combination of feminine qualities that could be placed in it without disagreeable difficulty and without degradation. It is with like uncritical, though not unwondering, acquiescence that Sebastian receives his good fortune; and it is the naturalness of this, as a point of twin likeness, that reconciles us to it, and thus saves him from any appearance of dulness on the one hand, or duplicity on the other.

With the confiding tenderness of Viola's character, there is combined a tranquil reflectiveness that rescues it from weakness, and is very engaging. Thus, in her first scene—

" There is a fair behaviour in thee, Captain,  
And though that nature, with a beauteous wall,  
Doth oft close in pollution,—yet of thee " . . . .

Again, when she perceives the direction of Olivia's infatuation—

" Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness  
Wherein the pregnant enemy doth much."

This touching self-accusation, the very key of the character, has been, I am sorry to say, left out when I have seen the play profaned upon the stage, to give the actress a false and foolish point in a strut of exultation and a tapping of the cap, at the words "I am the man."

The same fine spirit breathes through the lines—

“ I hate ingratitude more in a man  
Than lying, vainness, babbling, drunkenness,  
Or any taint of vice whose strong corruption  
Inhabits our frail blood.”

Viola loves tenderly while yet unwooed, but this sobriety of thought relieves her from any tinge of levity. Olivia is like her in both regards; and though more wilful, as her own mistress, we see enough of her, in the scene before the entrance of Viola, to be assured of her steadfast and valuable disposition.

Nothing less than the refinement and beauty with which this pair are depicted, could so far rivet our interest and attention to the sentimental portions of the play, as to enable them to make head against and countervail an overwhelming influence in the riotous fun and exuberant animal spirits of the secondary plot; nothing less would have kept this down in secondary place, both from the richness of its subject-matter, and the diffuseness that is permitted to it.

The manner in which the delicate little figure of Viola, the false boy-page, gets involved and entangled among the mischievous pranks of this subordinate group is highly diverting, and the exhibition was due to the world from Shakespeare. He who had already depicted with such geniality the disguises of Julia, Rosalind, Portia, and Imogen, owed the world yet this play. Without it the full amusement and interest derivable from the situation he so much delighted in, and had portrayed at once with such vivacity and such modesty, remained imperfectly expressed. The masquerading damsel in all her changes had yet escaped the most perplexing, the most ludicrously embarrassing situations, but the time came at last, and in the play of *Twelfth Night*. The disguise of Rosalind leads, it is true, to the same false positions as that of Viola, but in the latter case the difficulties are more exaggerated, to harmonize with the uproarious spirit of fun introduced into the piece. If Rosalind is wooed by Phebe, so is Viola, but still more importunately by Olivia; and the more markedly, that Olivia is no country girl, but a countess. If Rosalind finds her doublet and hose in the way of the promotion of her own love interest, still more so Viola, who has to thank them for making her an envoy to her rival to her own prejudice; and if Rosalind is unable to bear herself manly when the bloodstained napkin is exhibited, Viola is indeed in a difficulty when hedged in before and behind,—an antelope in toils that would hamper a bear, she is called upon to strip her sword stark naked and defend herself.

W. W. LLOYD.—*Essays on the Life and Plays of Shakespeare*  
(1858): “*Twelfth Night*.”

## SIR TOBY BELCH CONTRASTED WITH SIR JOHN FALSTAFF.

FALSTAFF is never represented as drunk, or even affected by wine. The copious potations of sack do not cloud his intellect, or embarrass his tongue. He is always self-possessed and ready to pour forth his floods of acute wit. In this he forms a contrast to Sir Toby Belch. The discrimination between these two characters is very masterly. Both are knights, both convivial, both fond of loose or jocular society, both somewhat in advance of their youth—there are many outward points of similitude, and yet they are as distinct as Prospero and Polonius. The Illyrian knight is of a lower class of mind. His jests are mischievous; Falstaff never commits a practical joke. Sir Toby delights in brawling and tumult; Sir John prefers the ease of his own inn. Sir Toby sings songs, joins in catches and rejoices in making a noise; Sir John knows too well his powers of wit and conversation to think it necessary to make any display, and he hates disturbance. Sir Toby is easily affected by liquor and roustering; Sir John rises from the board as cool as when he sat down. The knight of Illyria had nothing to cloud his mind; he never aspired to higher things than he has attained; he lives a jolly life in the household of his niece, feasting, drinking, singing, rioting, playing tricks from one end of the year to the other; his wishes are gratified, his hopes unblighted. I have endeavoured to show that Falstaff was the contrary of all this. And we must remark that the tumultuous Toby has some dash of romance in him, of which no trace can be found in the English knight. The wit and grace, the good humour and good looks of Maria, conquer Toby's heart, and he is in love with her—love expressed in rough fashion, but love sincere. Could we see him some dozen years after his marriage, we should find him sobered down into a respectable, hospitable, and domestic country gentleman, surrounded by a happy family of curly-headed Illyrians, and much fonder of his wife than of his bottle. We can never so consider of Falstaff; he must always be a dweller in clubs and taverns, a perpetual diner-out at gentlemen's parties, or a frequenter of haunts where he will not be disturbed by the presence of ladies of condition or character.

WILLIAM MAGINN.—*Shakespeare Papers* (1859), pp. 53—55.

## CHARACTER OF MALVOLIO.

MALVOLIO is not essentially ludicrous. He becomes comic, but by accident. He is cold, austere, repelling; but dignified, consistent, and, for what appears, rather of an over-stretched morality. Maria describes him as a sort of Puritan; and he might have worn his gold chain with honour in one of our Roundhead families, in the service of a

Lambert or a Lady Fairfax. But his morality and his manners are misplaced in Illyria. He is opposed to the proper *levities* of the piece, and falls in the unequal contest. Still his pride, or his gravity (call it which you will), is inherent and native to the man, not mock or affected, which latter only are the fit objects to excite laughter. His quality is at the best unlovely, but neither buffoon nor contemptible. His bearing is lofty, a little above his station, but probably not much above his deserts. We see no reason why he should not have been brave, honourable, accomplished. His careless committal of the ring to the ground (which he was commissioned to restore to Cesario), bespeaks a generosity of birth and feeling. His dialect on all occasions is that of a gentleman, and a man of education. We must not confound him with the eternal old, low steward of comedy. He is master of the household of a great princess; a dignity probably conferred upon him for other respects than age or length of service. Olivia, at the first indication of his supposed madness, declares that she "would not have him miscarry for half of her dowry." Does this look as if the character were meant to appear little or insignificant? Once, indeed, she accuses him to his face—of what?—of being "sick of self-love,"—but with a gentleness and considerateness which could not have been, if she had not thought that this particular infirmity shaded some virtues. His rebuke to the knight and his sottish revellers is sensible and spirited; and when we take into consideration the unprotected condition of his mistress, and the strict regard with which her state of real or dissembled mourning would draw the eyes of the world upon her house-affairs, Malvolio might feel the honour of the family in some sort in his keeping; as it appears not that Olivia had any more brothers, or kinsmen, to look to it—for Sir Toby had dropped all such nice respects at the buttery-hatch. That Malvolio was meant to be represented as possessing estimable qualities, the expression of the Duke, in his anxiety to have him reconciled, almost infers: "Pursue him, and entreat him to a peace." Even in his abused state of chains and darkness, a sort of greatness seems never to desert him. He argues highly and well with the supposed Sir Topas, and philosophises gallantly upon his straw. There must have been some shadow of worth about the man; he must have been something more than a mere vapour—a thing of straw, Jack in office—before Fabian and Maria could have ventured sending him upon a courting-errand to Olivia. There was some consonancy (as he would say) in the undertaking, or the jest would have been too bold even forth at house of misrule.

CHARLES LAMB.—*Essays of Elia*. "On Some of the Old Actors."

## THE COMIC SPIRIT OF THE PLAY.

THE more pregnantly . . . . the general comic view of things is expressed in the *Twelfth Night*, the more difficult it is to ascertain the *special modifications* which form the ground-work of this particular comedy. In vain does the attentive reader search amid the combined mass of all the separate elements of the comic view of things for the slightest indication to guide him to discover where the preponderance lies. At the first glance it might almost be thought the end in view was a comic exhibition of love, which indeed may well be the subject of the Comedy, in so far as it forms an essential principle of human existence, and as life, when considered from it, assumes a peculiar aspect. But it is not the real, and in this sense so influential passion of love, that we have to do with in this piece. Love here is rather a mere humour of fancy—a chameleon-like play of the feelings, a motley garb which the soul puts on and off with the changing fashion of the hour. The Duke's passion for Olivia burst out into flame for Viola as suddenly as love for him was kindled in her heart; Olivia's liking for Viola is easily satisfied with the substitution of her brother, who, on his part, has no scruple to be put in his sister's place, and Malvolio's and Sir Andrew's tenderness for Olivia is, after all, but a bubble. And even Antonio's friendship for Sebastian possesses the same characters of caprice and groundlessness. Thus does the motley capriciousness of love appear the chief impulse in the merry game of life, which is here laid open to our sight, and we cannot for a moment recognise any more serious view of it in the groundwork of this piece. . . . .

The dreamy, rapturous and music-loving Duke, the charming Olivia, girl-like, capricious, hard to please, but easily won, the tender, sensitive, but playful and witty Viola, Antonio with his fanciful friendship for Sebastian, and Sebastian with the natural rashness and impetuosity of youth, the trickish and roguish Maria, with her clever helper's helper—Fabian, all these characters are thrown off in such easy, flowing outline, and in such transparent colours, and harmonize so well together, that the slightest alteration would tear the varied, light and airy, but ingenious web that is spun around them. The clever contrast between the fool by profession and the involuntary simpletons, Malvolio, Sir Andrew, and Sir Toby, is perhaps the most carefully worked out of the whole piece. While their own folly and absurdity, notwithstanding all their struggles, does not force the cap-and-bells over their ears, the clown in the adopted gown of motley moves with inimitable ease, and pins the pied lappets of his wit to the backs of all the rest. . . . . What he wishes is nothing more nor less than to be a fool in the great fool's house, the world; hence he has an unconquerable aversion for all starched wisdom and reserve, and

for all hollow, unmeaning gravity, which can neither understand nor bear a joke, and on this account is he on such ill terms with Malvolio. He alone feels respect for his cap-and-bells ; for he knows that fun and laughter, joke and jest, belong in short to life, and that there is more depth and meaning in witty folly like his own than in the sour looks of so-called wise folk.

DR. HERMANN ULRICI.—*Shakespeare's Dramatic Art, translated by A. J. W. M.*, pp. 247—250.

### THE ROMANTIC COMEDY OF SHAKESPEARE CONTRASTED WITH THE GENTEEL COMEDY OF THE RESTORATION.

WITH respect to that part of comedy which relates to gallantry and intrigue, the difference between Shakespeare's comic heroines and those of a later period may be referred to the same distinction between natural and artificial life, between the world of fancy and the world of fashion. The refinements of romantic passion arise out of the imagination brooding over "airy nothing," or over a favourite object, where "love's golden shaft hath killed the flock of all affections else:" whereas the refinements of this passion in genteel comedy, or in every-day life, may be said to arise out of repeated observation and experience, diverting and frittering away the first impressions of things by a multiplicity of objects, and producing, not enthusiasm, but fastidiousness or giddy dissipation. For the one a comparatively rude age and strong feelings are best fitted ; for "there the mind must minister to itself:" to the other, the progress of society and a knowledge of the world are essential ; for here the effect does not depend on leaving the mind centred in itself, but on the wear and tear of the heart, amidst the complex and rapid movements of the artificial machinery of society, and on the arbitrary subjection of the natural course of the affections to every slightest fluctuation of fashion, caprice, or opinion. Thus Olivia, in *Twelfth Night*, has but one admirer of equal rank with herself, and but one love, to whom she innocently plights her hand and heart ; or if she had a thousand lovers, she would be the sole object of their adoration and burning vows, without a rival. The heroine of romance and poetry sits secluded in her bowers of fancy, sole queen and arbitress of all hearts ; and as the character is one of imagination, "of solitude and melancholy musing born," so it may be best drawn from the imagination. Millamont in the *Way of the World*, has so many lovers, that she surfeits on admiration, till it becomes indifferent to her ; so many rivals, that she is forced to put on a thousand airs of languid affectation to mortify and vex them more ; so many offers, that she at last gives her hand to the man of her heart, rather to escape the persecution of their addresses, and out of levity and disdain, than from any serious choice of her own. This



is a comic character, its essence consists of making light of things from familiarity and use, and it is formed by habit and outward circumstances, so it requires actual observation, and an acquaintance with the modes of artificial life, to describe it with the utmost possible grace and precision. Congreve, who had every other opportunity, was but a young man when he wrote this character; and that makes the miracle the greater.

I do not, in short, consider comedy as exactly an affair of the heart or the imagination; and it is for this reason only that I think Shakespeare's comedies deficient. I do not, however, wish to give a preference to any comedies over his; but I do perceive a difference between his comedies and some others that are, notwithstanding, excellent in their way; and I have endeavoured to point out in what this difference consists, as well as I could. Finally, I will not say that he had not as great a natural genius for comedy as any one; but I may venture to say, that he had not the same artificial models and regulated mass of fashionable absurdity or elegance to work upon.

W. HAZLITT.—*Lectures on the English Comic Writers* (1869), pp. 47—48.

## ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

### ACT I.

#### SCENE I. *Rousillon. The Count's Palace.*

BERTRAM, *the* COUNTESS of ROUSILLON,  
HELENA, and LAFEU.

*Count.* Heaven bless him ! Farewell, Bertram.

[*Exit.*

*Ber.* [*To Helena*] The best wishes that can be forged in your thoughts be servants to you ! Be comfortable to my mother, your mistress, and make much of her.

*Laf.* Farewell, pretty lady : you must hold the credit of your father.

[*Exeunt Bertram and Lafeu.*

*Hel.* O, were that all ! I think not on my father ;  
And these great tears grace his remembrance more  
Than those I shed for him. What was he like ?  
I have forgot him : my imagination  
Carries no favour in 't, but Bertram's.  
I am undone : there is no living, none,

If Bertram be away. 'Twere all one  
That I should love a bright particular star  
And think to wed it, he is so above me :  
In his bright radiance and collateral light  
Must I be comforted, not in his sphere.  
The ambition in my love thus plagues itself :  
The hind that would be mated by the lion  
Must die for love. 'Twas pretty, though a plague,  
To see him every hour ; to sit and draw  
His arched brows, his hawking eye, his curls,  
In our heart's table ; heart too capable  
Of every line and trick of his sweet favour :  
But now he's gone, and my idolatrous fancy  
Must sanctify his reliques. Who comes here ?

*Enter PAROLLES.*

[*Aside*] One that goes with him : I love him for his sake ;

And yet I know him a notorious liar,  
Think him a great way fool, solely a coward ;  
Yet these fix'd evils sit so fit in him,  
That they take place, when virtue's steely bones  
Look bleak i' the cold wind : withal, full oft we  
see

Cold wisdom waiting on superfluous folly.

*Par.* Save you, fair queen !

*Hel.* And you, monarch !

### THE THEME OF "ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL."

WHAT, then, did Shakespeare find in Boccaccio's novel, which he read in Paynter's translation ? What was it that tempted him to dramatise it ? It was evidently only the character of Giletta, who being filled with a burning love for Beltramo, undertakes to win him herself, and actually succeeds in marrying him, although she succeeds in winning his love only after overcoming various obstacles by stratagem, which is as fair in love as in war. The story of this courtship, which is not tempered either by the motives or by the characters, makes upon us—to use Gervinus's severe words—the impression of "boundless importunity," and according to him is tolerable only in the novelist, with whom the "credulous ear is a far more indulgent judge than the sharp eye of the spectator in front of the stage." We should, however, not forget that the play must have given far less offence at a time when the subject of a girl following the man she loves was a favourite dramatic theme ; we need only recall to mind the Spanish Theatre, *Pastor Fido*, the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, &c.



*Fr. Licht del.*

*Fr. Bauer sc.*

*Ende gut, alles gut — 'Tis well that ends well.*



However this may be, Shakespeare was charmed by the story and the character of Giletta ; such glowing and such faithful love could not but deeply affect him, and stir up within him many questions and considerations. Might not a woman's love in its fulness and sincerity claim the same right to gratification as a man's? Should her heart be condemned by nature to unbroken silence, and in the end sink in painful resignation? Helena herself expresses similar thoughts in the following words, in which she however in the first place thinks but of the difference of rank separating her from the man she loves :—

“ Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,  
Which we ascribe to Heaven ; the fated sky  
Gives us free scope, only doth backward pull  
Our slow designs when we ourselves are dull . . . .  
Impossible be strange attempts to those  
That weigh their pains with sense ; and do suppose  
That what hath been cannot be. Who ever strove  
To show her merit that did miss her love ? ”

Starting from reflections like these, Helena undertakes the “strange attempt” to win the beloved man, and this shows why *All's Well that Ends Well* could not be formed into a perfect comedy, whereas the *Taming of the Shrew* is a comedy out and out. In the *Taming of the Shrew* we have only a comic or burlesque exaggeration of the natural relation between man and woman, whereas here the reverse of this natural relation is attempted and poetically justified. The courting done by the woman goes, so to speak, against the grain ; it is either simply repulsive, or else it inclines to tragedy. After the poet had once chosen the subject, the main thing to be done certainly was to endeavour that the woman should as imperceptibly as possible pass the bounds assigned to her by nature and custom, for the man-woman, a modern emancipation heroine, would never have been a character for whom Shakespeare could have become enthusiastic, he who everywhere places genuine womanliness so high, who has created immortal ideals of feminine feeling and life, and to whom the idea of female emancipation was utterly foreign. An attempt was to be made,—here was a problem which the great searcher of hearts could not resist ; he had described courtship so often, and from such different points of view, why not once from this point also ?

KARL ELZE.—*Essays on Shakespeare* (translated by L. Dora Schmitz),  
(1874) pp. 122—124.

## THE CHARACTER OF HELENA.

THE character of the heroine, Helena, is one of rare sweetness, blended with high romantic fervour. She is placed in the singularly critical position of courting her husband, both as a maiden and a wife; and the glorious testimony to the transparent beauty of virtue is fully borne out, and a triumph achieved, by her not committing one single violation of the laws of the most scrupulous modesty.

I must take leave to say a few words in behalf, and I hope in justification, of Helena, whose principle of action appears to have been wonderfully mistaken, and whose mental structure to have been—I will not say, unappreciated, but not even recognised by the general reader. Of all Shakespeare's heroines, it strikes me that Helena is the one most philosophical, both in temperament and in speech and conduct. When I say "philosophical in temperament," I do not mean that she is either stoical or resigned. She is the very reverse of either. But she is reflective, she is observant, and she is essentially *remedial*. An apparently hopeless passion has taught her reflection, introspection, and humility of spirit. It has taught her to think conscientiously, to reason justly, to weigh her own and others' claims carefully. She has discernment and she has warmth of heart: the first teaching her to perceive accurately, the latter impelling her to decide generously. She, therefore, estimates herself and her own value at modest rate, while to Bertram she awards all the superiority that loving worship takes delight in imputing to its chosen idol. But at the same time that Helena's affection prompts her to *overrate* the man she loves, and to *underrate* herself, her disposition will not let her sink beneath the sense of disparity. Her own character will not let her do this; for besides its diffidence of self, it possesses uncommon self-reliance and moral courage,—a combination less rare than is generally believed. Womanly gentleness and modesty, together with womanly firmness and fortitude, are far from incompatible; and in Helena of Narbonne they co-exist to a remarkable degree. The kind of gentleness which consists of mere prone and passive yieldingness, oftener degenerates into weakness, ending in obstinacy and slyness, than Helena's kind of gentleness, which is self-modesty without self-distrust. She is conscious, to an acutely-sensitive degree, of her own inadequate pretensions; but she is also conscious—involuntarily conscious, as it were—of her own powers to win through patient trial, earnest attempt, and devoted endeavour. It is this that makes Helena's philosophy so "remedial" a one. Ever ready to acknowledge her lack of *personal* merit, she is inwardly aware of a *moral* merit, that requires but time and opportunity to obtain for her that which her own simple attractions are unable to command. She does not feel herself formed to inspire regard, but she knows herself worthy to gain regard; and this she diligently and faithfully dedicates her whole thoughts and energies to achieve. Observe

here with what mingled fervour and humility her loving thoughts clothe themselves in thoughtful words—

“ ’Tis pity  
That wishing well had not a body in ’t,  
Which might be felt ;—that we, the poorer born,  
Whose baser stars do shut us up in wishes,  
Might with effects of them follow our friends,  
And show what we alone must think, which never  
Returns us thanks.”

Helena, with the true courage born of a practical and remedial philosophy, is eager to find resources in her own sense of resolve. She says—

“ Our remedies oft *in ourselves* do lie  
Which we ascribe to Heaven : the fated sky  
Gives us free scope ; only doth backward pull  
Our slow designs, when *we ourselves* are dull.”

She gathers confidence from inborn consciousness of steadfastness and ardour of perseverance, exclaiming—

“ Impossible be strange attempts to those  
That weigh their pains in sense ; and do suppose  
What hath been cannot be. Who ever strove  
To show her merit that did miss her love ?”

The same characteristic earnestness, with faith in the philosophy of *endeavour*, marks the whole of her arguments with the king during the interview where she seeks to persuade him of the efficacy of her father’s medicine. She thus modestly, yet ardently, urges him to essay its effect—

“ What I can do, can do no hurt to try,  
Since you set up your rest ’gainst remedy.  
HE that of greatest works is finisher,  
Oft does them by the weakest minister.  
So Holy Writ in *babes* hath judgment shown,  
When judges have been babes. Great floods have flown  
From simple sources ; and great seas have dried,  
When miracles have by the greatest been denied.  
*Oft expectation fails ; and most oft there  
Where most it promises ; and oft it hits  
Where hope is coldest, and despair most fits.*”

This is perfectly the language of one accustomed to reason hopefully in the midst of discouragement, and to reap fruit for trust out of the most unpromising occurrences. Helena has a spirit of fervent reliance, the offspring of her very meekness and innocent

humility. When the king waives her proffered help, she thus gently, yet warmly, meets his refusal. Her speech is at once femininely diffident and devoutly earnest :—

“ Inspired merit so by breath is barr’d.  
It is not so with HIM that all things knows,  
As ’tis with us that square our guess by shows :  
But most it is presumption in us, when  
The help of Heaven we count the act of men.  
Dear sir, to my endeavour give consent :  
Of Heaven, not me, make an experiment.  
I am not an impostor that proclaim  
Myself against the level of mine aim ;  
But now I think, and think I know most sure,  
My art is not past power, nor you past cure.”

No wonder such eloquent persuasion succeeds in its desired effect upon her royal listener. He replies, “ Art thou so confident? Within what space hop’st thou my cure?” And then Helena answers his words full of her characteristically humble, yet trustful spirit—rising into poetic beauty with her own mounting hope :—

“ The greatest grace lending grace,  
Ere twice the horses of the sun shall bring  
Their fiery torcher his diurnal ring ;  
Ere twice in murk and occidental damp  
Moist Hesperus hath quench’d his sleepy lamp,  
Or four-and-twenty times the pilot’s glass  
Hath told the thievish minutes how they pass ;  
What is infirm from your sound parts shall fly ;  
Health shall live free, and sickness freely die.”

The essence of Helena’s philosophy, in its practical energy, which prefers deeds to speech, and its hopeful nature, ever looking to the possibility of good, as well as facing the existence of evil, is contained in those few words of hers where she interrupts something she was going to say, thus :—

“ But with the word the time will bring on summer ;  
When briars shall have *leaves* as well as *thorns*,  
And be as *sweet* as *sharp*. We must away.  
Our waggon is prepar’d, and time revives us ;  
All’s well that ends well. Still the fine’s the crown ;  
Whate’er the course, the end is the renown.”

Helena’s remedial philosophy supplies her with one invaluable resource—unflinching courage against disappointment. When on her journey homewards, hoping to meet the king at Marseilles, and, arriving there, finds him just gone, with what promptitude and



cheerfulness she prepares to follow him. No time wasted in weak lamentation and regret, but active resolve and steady perseverance. This is precisely the kind of courage—moral courage—which women of Helena's nature and philosophy possess. It is the noblest, the sublimest courage; and it is essentially feminine courage. Fortitude of spirit against discouragement—bravery of heart and mind against disappointment, disaster, and defeat—constitute womanly valour; and we see that the gentlest, at the same time the firmest, among women, are those most distinguished by this heroic attribute. So much for Helena's philosophy.

But Helena has been tacitly impeached, if not openly arraigned, of an unseemly forwardness in the proffer of herself and her affections. She has had high justice done her, it is true, at the hands of several critics: Coleridge calling her upon one occasion "Shakespeare's *loveliest* character;" Hazlitt saying, "She is placed in circumstances of the most critical kind . . . yet the most scrupulous nicety of female modesty is not once violated;" Charles Lamb ascribing to her "the full lustre of the female character;" and lastly, one of her own sex, Mrs. Jameson, in her *Characteristics of Women*, having written a noble vindication of her character and conduct. Yet, still there has been a prevailing feeling—an impression—that Helena is guilty of unfeminine want of delicacy and reserve in the manifestation of her passion for Bertram; and the very zeal of her defenders in pleading her cause evinces the consciousness that such an impression exists. How this impression has arisen, I think, I can show. In the first place, Helena, as has been already said, is a remarkable union of moral force and courage with gentleness and tenderness of heart; and there are many men who cannot believe in—nay, who cannot see—gentleness and softness in a woman's nature, if it be accompanied with *strength of character*. There is a favourite cant phrase in Noodledom (as Sidney Smith calls the region of numskulls) about "strong-minded women," which seems to preclude the possibility of strength in co-existence with gentleness of feeling and softness of manner. As "strong-minded women" are frequently spoken of, one would think a "strong-minded" woman must necessarily have the figure of a horse-guard, the swag of a drayman, and the sensibility of a carcase-butcher. Helena, in her energy of purpose, in her quickness of intelligence to discern a means of fulfilling her object, and in her spirited pursuit of those means, may give the idea of unfeminine will and decision to those who confound passiveness with gentleness, helplessness with retiring delicacy, and incapacity with modesty; a confounding of qualities which characterises the opinion of one class of men, about women, of the present day. But those who know how entirely consistent with unaffected diffidence of self, is the utmost heroism of self-devotion and self-exertion, in women, distinguished by all their sex's grace of person, sentiment, and behaviour, will perceive nothing but truest feminine beauty in all that Helena does. She has that absence of self-conceit, with reliance upon her sense of right, which abases no jot of modest

feeling and demeanour, while it leads to the most courageous endeavour. No difficulty daunts her, because she has confidence in the *motive* which impels her, rather than *in her own power* to accomplish its ends,—a characteristic distinction deserving of notice.

C. COWDEN CLARKE.—*Shakespeare Characters* (1863), pp. 246—251.

### CHANGES OF TYPE IN SHAKESPEARE'S FEMALE CHARACTERS.

THE changes of type which took place in the prominent female characters of Shakespeare's plays as the poet passed from youth to manhood, and from early manhood to riper maturity, would form an interesting subject for detailed study. The emotional women of the early plays, if not turbulent and aggressive, are still deficient in delicacy of heart, in refinement of instinct, impulse, and habit. The intellectual women, who stand by the side of these, are bright and clever, but over-confident, forward, or defiant. In the early historical plays appear terrible female forms,—women whose ambitions have been foiled, whose hearts have been torn and crushed, who are filled with fierce sorrow, passionate indignation, a thirst for revenge. Such are the Duchess of Gloster, Margaret of Anjou, Queen Elinor, Constance. As comedy succeeds comedy the female characters become more complex, more subtle, more exquisite. Rosaline's flouting of Berowne becomes Rosalind's arch mockery of Orlando, or the sportive contests of Beatrice with Benedick. In Portia of the *Merchant of Venice* intellect and emotions play into one another with exquisite swiftness, brightness, and vital warmth.

Just at the close of the period which gave birth to Shakespeare's most joyous comedies, and at the entrance to the tragic period, appear types of female character which are distinguished by some single element of peculiar strength, Helena, Isabella, Portia of *Julius Cæsar* (type of perfect womanly heroism, yet environed by the weakness of her sex); and over against these are studies of feminine incapacity or ignobleness—Ophelia, Gertrude, Cressida. It is as if Shakespeare at this time needed some one strong, outstanding excellence to grasp and steady himself by, and had lost his delight in the even harmony of character which suits us, and brings us joy when we make no single, urgent, and peculiar demand for help. Next follow the tragic figures—Desdemona, the invincible loyalty of wifehood; Cordelia, the invincible filial loyalty; sacrificial lives, which are offered up, and which sanctify the earth, lives which fall in the strife with evil, and which falling achieve their victories of love. And as these make the world beautiful and sacred, even while they leave it strange and sorrowful, so over against them appear the destroyers of life—Lady Macbeth, and the monsters Goneril, Regan.

Finally, in Shakespeare's latest plays appear upon the one hand the figures of the

great sufferers—calm, self-possessed, much enduring, free from self-partiality, unjust resentment, and the passion of revenge—Queen Katharine, Hermione; and on the other hand are exquisite girlish figures, children who have known no sorrow, over whom is shed a magical beauty, an ideal light, while above them Shakespeare is seen, as it were, bowing tenderly—Miranda, Perdita. How great a distance has been traversed! Instead of the terrible Margaret of Anjou we have here Queen Katharine. Shakespeare in his early period would have found cold, and without suitability for the purposes of art, Katharine's patience, reserve, and equilibrium of soul. Instead of Rosaline here is Perdita. A death-bed glorious with a vision of angels, and the exquisite dawn of a young girl's life, these are the two last themes on which the imagination of the poet cared to dwell affectionately and long.

EDWARD DOWDEN.—*Shakspeare, his Mind and Art* (1875), pp. 91—93.

## JULIUS. CÆSAR.

## ACT I.

SCENE II. *Rome. A Public Place.*

## BRUTUS and CASSIUS.

*Bru.* The games are done and Cæsar is returning.

*Car.* As they pass by, pluck Casca by the sleeve;  
And he will, after his sour fashion, tell you  
What hath proceeded worthy note to-day.

*Re-enter CÆSAR and his Train.*

*Bru.* I will do so. But, look you, Cassius,  
The angry spot doth glow on Cæsar's brow,  
And all the rest look like a chidden train:  
Calpurnia's cheek is pale; and Cicero  
Looks with such ferret and such fiery eyes  
As we have seen him in the Capitol,  
Being cross'd in conference by some senators.

*Cas.* Casca will tell us what the matter is.

*Cæs.* Antonius!

*Ant.* Cæsar?

*Cæs.* Let me have men about me that are  
fat:

Sleek-headed men and such as sleep o'night  
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look;  
He thinks too much: such men are dangerous.

*Ant.* Fear him not, Cæsar; he's not dangerous;

He is a noble Roman and well given.

*Cæs.* Would he were fatter! But I fear him not:

Yet if my name were liable to fear,

I do not know the man I should avoid

So soon as that spare Cassius. He reads much;

He is a great observer, and he looks

Quite through the deeds of men; he loves no  
plays,

As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music;

Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort

As if he mock'd himself and scorn'd his spirit

That could be moved to smile at anything.

Such men as he be never at heart's ease

Whiles they behold a greater than themselves,

And therefore are they very dangerous.

I rather tell thee what is to be fear'd

Than what I fear; for always I am Cæsar.

Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf,

And tell me truly what thou think'st of him.

[*Sennet. Exeunt Cæsar and all his  
Train, but Casca.*]

## SHAKESPEARE'S TREATMENT OF THE CHARACTER OF JULIUS CÆSAR.

SEVERAL critics of high judgment have found fault with the naming of this play, on the ground that Brutus and not Cæsar is the hero of it. It is indeed true that Brutus is the hero; nevertheless, the play is, I think, rightly named, inasmuch as Cæsar is not only the subject but also the governing power throughout. He is the centre and spring-head of the entire action, giving law and shape to all that is said and done. This is manifestly true in what occurs before his death; and it is true in a still deeper sense afterwards, since his genius then becomes the Nemesis or retributive Providence, presiding over the whole course of the drama. Accordingly the key-note of the play is rightly given by Brutus near the close—

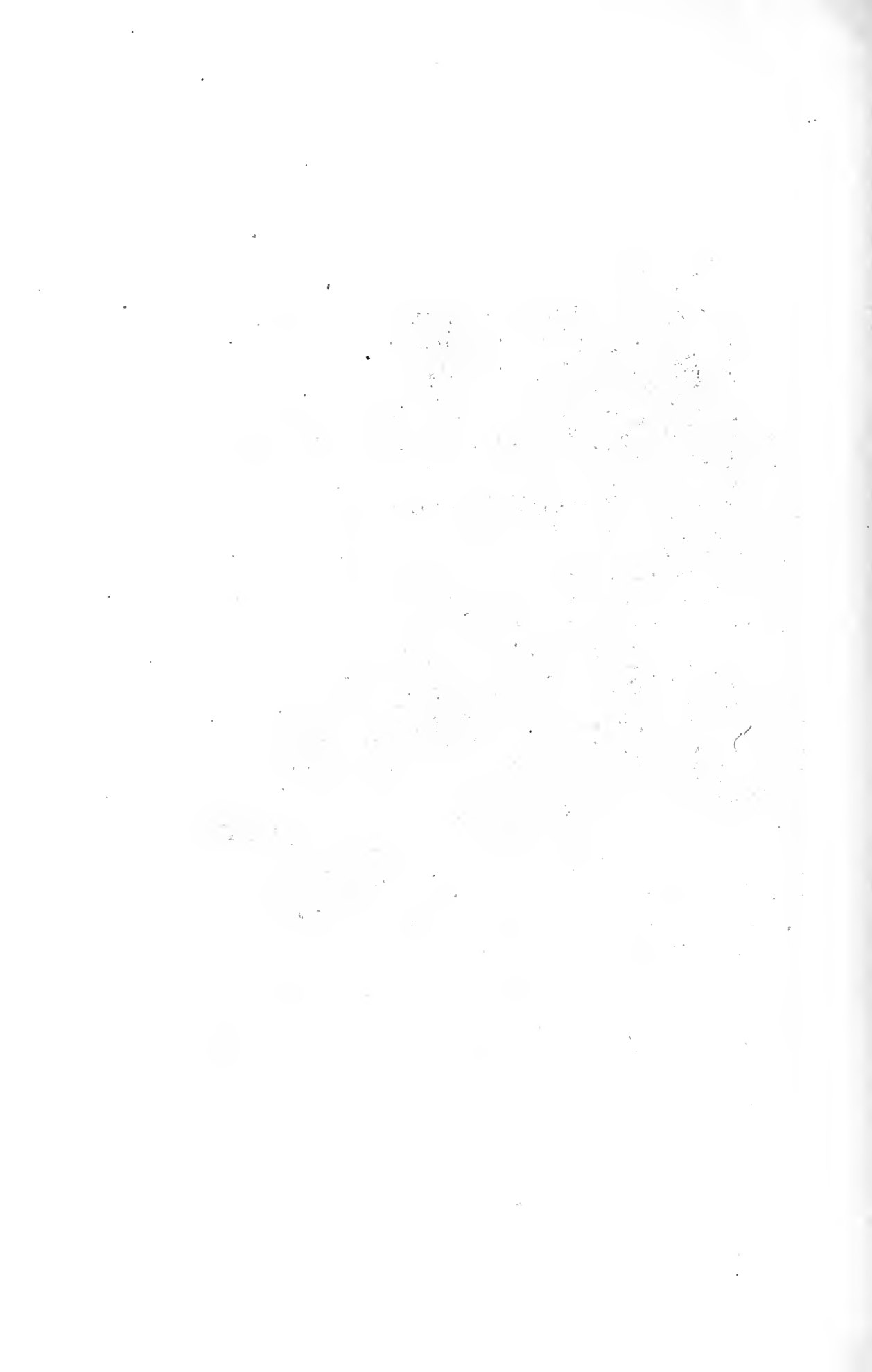
“O, Julius Cæsar, thou art mighty yet!  
Thy spirit walks abroad, and turns our swords  
In our own proper entrails.”



J. D. Thompson del.

W. C. Adams scul.

Julius Caesar - Julius Caesar.



The characterization is, I confess, in some parts not a little perplexing to me. I do not feel quite sure as to the temper of mind in which the poet conceived some of the persons, or why he should have given them the aspect they wear in the play. For instance, Cæsar is far from being himself in these scenes; hardly one of the speeches put into his mouth can be regarded as historically characteristic; taking all of them together, they are little short of a downright caricature. As here represented, he is indeed little better than a grand, strutting piece of puff-paste; and when he speaks, it is very much in the style of a glorious vapourer and braggart, full of lofty airs and mock thunder; than which nothing could be further from the truth of the man, whose character, even in his faults, was as compact and solid as adamant, and at the same time as limber and ductile as the finest gold. Yet we have ample proof that the Poet understood "the mightiest Julius" thoroughly. He has many allusions to him scattered through his plays, all going to show that he regarded him as, what Merivale pronounces him, "the greatest name in history." And indeed it is clear from this play itself, that the Poet's course did not proceed at all from ignorance or misconception of the man. For it is remarkable that though Cæsar delivers himself so much out of character, yet others, both foes and friends, deliver him much nearer the truth; so that, while we see almost nothing of him directly, we nevertheless get, upon the whole, a pretty just reflection of him. Especially in the marvellous speeches of Antony, and in the later events of the drama, both his inward greatness and his right of mastership over the Roman world are fully vindicated. For in the play, as in history, Cæsar's blood just cements the empire which the conspirators thought to prevent. He proves indeed far mightier in death than in life; as if his spirit were become at once the guardian angel of his cause, and an avenging angel to his foes. And so it was in fact. For nothing did so much to set the people in love with royalty, both name and thing, as the reflection that their beloved Cæsar, the greatest of their national heroes, the crown and consummation of Roman genius and manhood, had been murdered for aspiring to it.

Now I have no doubt that Shakespeare perfectly understood the whole height and compass of Cæsar's vast and varied capacity. And I sometimes regret that he did not render him as he evidently saw him, inasmuch as he alone, perhaps, of all the men who ever wrote, could have given an adequate expression of that colossal man. And this seeming contradiction between Cæsar as known and Cæsar as rendered by him, is what, more than anything else in the drama, perplexes me. But there is, I think, a very refined, subtle, and peculiar irony pervading this, more than any other of the Poet's plays; not intended, as such, indeed, by the speakers; but a sort of historic irony,—the irony of Providence, so to speak, or, if you please, of fate; much the same as is implied in the proverb, "A haughty spirit goes before a fall." This irony crops out in many places. Thus we have Cæsar most blown with self-importance, and godding it in the loftiest style, when the daggers of the assassins are on the very point of leaping at him. So, too, all

along, we find Brutus most confident in those very things where he is most at fault, or acting like a man "most ignorant of what he's most assur'd;" as when he says that Antony "can do no more than Cæsar's arm when Cæsar's head is off." This, to be sure, is not meant ironically by him; but it is turned into irony by the fact that Antony soon tears the cause of the conspirators all to pieces with his tongue.

H. N. HUDSON.—*School Shakespeare*, Vol. I. pp. 427—428.

### BRUTUS AND CASSIUS.

OF all Shakespeare's characters none require to be studied with more patient attention than those of Brutus and Cassius, that we may understand the resemblances and the differences of each. The leading distinctions between these two remarkable men, as drawn by Shakespeare, appear to us to be these: Brutus acts wholly upon principle; Cassius, partly upon impulse. Brutus acts only when he has reconciled the contemplation of action with his speculative opinions; Cassius allows the necessity of *some* action to run before and govern his opinions. Brutus is a philosopher; Cassius is a partisan. Brutus therefore deliberates and spares; Cassius precipitates and denounces. Brutus is the nobler instructor; Cassius the better politician. Shakespeare, in the first great scene between them, brings out these distinctions of character upon which future events so mainly depend. Cassius does not, like a merely crafty man, use only the arguments to conspiracy which will most touch Brutus; but he mixes with them, in his zeal and vehemence, those which have presented themselves most strongly to his own mind. He had a personal dislike of Cæsar, as Cæsar had of him. Cassius begins artfully; he would first move Brutus through his affection, and next through his self-love. He is opening a set discourse on his own sincerity, when the shouting of the people makes Brutus express his fear that they "choose Cæsar for their king." Cassius at once leaves his prepared speeches, and assumes that because Brutus fears it, he would not have it so:—

"I would not, Cassius; yet I love him well."

Cassius sees that the love which Brutus bears to Cæsar will be an obstacle; and he goes on to disparage Cæsar. He could not buffet the waves with Cassius; when he had a fever in Spain—

"Alas! *it* cried, 'Give me some drink, Titinius.'"

Brutus answers not, but marks "another general shout." Cassius then strikes a different note:—

"Brutus and Cæsar: what should be in that Cæsar?  
Why should that name be sounded more than yours?"



At last Cassius hits upon a *principle* :—

“ Oh ! you and I have heard our fathers say,  
There was a Brutus once that would have brook'd  
The eternal devil to keep his state in Rome,  
As easily as a king.”

The Stoic is at last moved :—

“ Brutus had rather be a villager  
Than to repute himself a son of Rome  
Under these hard conditions as this time  
Is like to lay upon us.”

In the next scene, when Cæsar is returning from the games, the dictator describes Cassius, —the Cassius with “a lean and hungry look,” the “great observer”—as one whom he could fear if he could fear anything. In the subsequent dialogue with Casca, where the narrative of what passed at the games is conducted with a truth that puts the very scene before us, Cassius again strikes in with the thought that is uppermost in his mind. Brutus says that Cæsar “hath the falling sickness ;” the reply of Cassius is most characteristic :—

“ No, Cæsar hath it not ; but you, and I,  
And honest Casca, we have the falling sickness.”

Brutus goes home to meditate. The energy of Cassius is never weary. In the storm he is still the conspirator. The “impatience of the heavens” furnishes him an argument against the man—

“ Prodigious grown  
And fearful, as these strange eruptions are.”

The plot is maturing. Brutus especially is to be won.

Coleridge, who, when he doubts of a meaning in Shakespeare—or, what is rarer, suggests that there is some inconsistency in the conduct of the scene, or the development of character—has the highest claim upon our deferential regard, gives the soliloquy of Brutus in the beginning of the second act with the following observations :—“ This speech is singular ; at least I do not at present see into Shakespeare’s motive, his *rationale*, or in what point of view he meant Brutus’s character to appear. For surely—(this I mean is what I say to myself with my present *quantum* of insight, only modified by my experience in how many instances I had ripened into a perception of beauties, where I had before descried faults)—surely, nothing can seem more discordant with our historical preconceptions of Brutus, or more lowering the intellect of the Stoico-Platonic tyrannicide, than the tenets here attributed to him,—to him,—the stern Roman republican ; namely, that he would have no objection to a king, or to Cæsar, a monarch in Rome, would Cæsar but be as

good a monarch as he now seems disposed to be ! How, too, could Brutus say that he found no personal cause—none—in Cæsar's past conduct as a man? Had he not passed the Rubicon? Had he not entered Rome as a conqueror? Had he not placed his Gauls in the Senate? Shakespeare, it may be said, has not brought these things forward. True; and this is just the ground of my perplexity. What character did Shakespeare mean his Brutus to be?" To this question we venture to reply, according to our imperfect conception of the character of Brutus. Shakespeare meant him not for a conspirator. He has a terror of conspiracy :—

“ Where wilt thou find a cavern deep enough  
To mask thy monstrous visage !”

He has been “with himself at war,” speculating, we doubt not, upon the strides of Cæsar towards absolute power, but unprepared to resist them. Of Cæsar he has said “I love him well;” he now says :—

“ I know no personal cause to spurn at him.”

We are by no means sure of the correct punctuation of this passage as it is usually given. Brutus has come to a conclusion in the watches of the night :—

“ It must be by his death.”

He disavows, however, any personal hatred to Cæsar :—

“ And for my part  
I know no *personal* cause to spurn at him.”

He then adds :—

“ But for the *general*—he would be crown'd ;  
How that might change his nature, there's the question.”

He goes from the personal cause to the general cause : “He would be crowned.” As a triumvir, a dictator, Brutus had no personal cause against Cæsar ; but the name of king, which Cassius poured into his ear, rouses all his speculative republicanism. His experience of Cæsar calls from him the acknowledgment that Cæsar's affections sway not more than his reason ; but crown him, and his nature might be changed. We must bear in mind, that Brutus is not yet committed to the conspiracy. The character that Shakespeare meant his Brutus to be is not yet fully developed. He is yet irresolute ; and his reasonings are therefore, to a certain extent, inconsequential :—

“ Since Cassius first did whet me against Cæsar  
 I have not slept.  
 Between the acting of a dreadful thing  
 And the first motion, all the interim is  
 Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream.”

He is instigated from without ; the principles associated with the name of Brutus stir him from within :—

“ My ancestors did from the streets of Rome  
 The Tarquin drive, when he was call'd a king.”

The “faction” come. Cassius and Brutus speak together apart. — Let us turn aside for a moment to see how Shakespeare fills up this terrible pause. Other poets would have made the inferior men exchange oaths, and cross swords, and whisper, and ejaculate. He makes everything depend upon the determination of Brutus and Cassius ; and the others, knowing it so depends, speak thus :—

“ *Dec.* Here lies the east : Doth not the day break here ?  
*Casca.* No.  
*Cin.* Oh, pardon, sir, it doth ; and yon gray lines  
 That fret the clouds are messengers of day.  
*Casca.* You shall confess that you are both deceived.  
 Here, as I point my sword, the sun arises ;  
 Which is a great way growing on the south,  
 Weighing the youthful season of the year.  
 Some two months hence up higher toward the north  
 He first presents his fire ; and the high east  
 Stands, as the Capitol, directly here.”

Is this nature? The truest and most profound nature. The minds of all men thus disencumber themselves, in the moments of the most anxious suspense, from the pressure of an overwhelming thought. There is a real relief, if some accidental circumstance, like “yon grey lines that fret the clouds” can produce this disposition of mind to go out of itself for an instant or two of forgetfulness.

But Brutus is changed. We have no doubt *now* of his character. He is the leader, Cassius the subordinate. He is decided in his course : he will not “break with” Cicero : he will not destroy Antony. We recognise the gentleness of his nature, even while he is preparing for assassination :—

“ Oh, that we then could come by Cæsar's spirit,  
 And not dismember Cæsar.”

In the exquisite scene with Portia which follows, our love for the man is completed ; we learn that he has suffered before he has taken his resolution. There is something more than commonly touching in these words :—

“ You are my dear and honourable wife ;  
As dear to me as are the ruddy drops  
That visit my sad heart.”

The pathos in some degree depends upon our knowledge of the situation of the speaker, which Portia does not know.

CHARLES KNIGHT.—*Studies of Shakspeare* (1851), pp. 411—414.

### SHAKESPEARE'S USE OF PLUTARCH.

THE book [*Plutarch's Lives*] was fortunate in its first introduction to the knowledge of the English reader. It is true that Sir Thomas North, whose translation made its first appearance as early as the year 1579, did not draw from the original Greek, that his book is the translation, being derived, and announcing itself as derived, from Amyot's French version ; and as such reproducing Amyot's blunders and mistakes, while it adds some more of its own. But for all this, as a document marking a particular stage of the English language, and some of the best aspects of the language at that time, I hold it to be of very high value, and give no heed to Dryden's disparaging judgment about it. It may not have the same amount of interest for a student of English as Amyot's translation has for the student of French, nor mark an epoch in our language as distinctly as that other does in the French. But for all this, the book contains treasures of idiomatic English, of word and phrase which have now escaped us, and whereof no small part might with signal advantage be recalled. . . . But the highest title of honour which this book possesses has not hitherto been mentioned, namely, the use which Shakespeare was content to make of it. Whatever Latin Shakespeare may have had he certainly knew no Greek, and thus it was only through Sir Thomas North's translation that the rich treasure-house of Plutarch's *Lives* was accessible to him. Nor do I think it too much to affirm that his three great Roman plays, reproducing the ancient Roman world as no other modern poetry has ever done—I refer to *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*—would never have existed, or had Shakespeare lighted by chance on these arguments, would have existed in forms altogether different from those in which they now appear, if Plutarch had not written, and Sir Thomas North, or some other in his place, had not translated. We have in Plutarch not the framework or skeleton only of the story, no, nor yet merely the ligaments and

sinews, but very much also of the flesh and blood wherewith these are covered and clothed.

How noticeable in this respect is the difference between Shakespeare's treatment of Plutarch and his treatment of others, upon whose hints, more or less distinct, he elsewhere has spoken! How little is it in most cases which he condescends to use of the materials offered to his hand! Take, for instance, his employment of some novel, Bandello's or Cinthio's. He derives from it the barest outline—a suggestion perhaps is all, with a name or two here and there, but neither dialogue nor character. On the first occasion that offers he abandons his original altogether, that so he may expatiate freely in the higher and nobler world of his own thoughts and fancies. But his relations with Plutarch are different—different enough to justify, or almost to justify, the words of Jean Paul, when in his *Titan* he calls Plutarch 'der biographische Shakespeare der Weltgeschichte.' What a testimony we have to the true artistic sense and skill, which with all his occasional childlike simplicity the old biographer possesses, in the fact that the mightiest and completest artist of all times should be content to resign himself into his hands, and simply to follow where the other leads!

His *Julius Cæsar* will abundantly bear out what I have just affirmed—a play dramatically and poetically standing so high that it only just falls short of that supreme rank which *Lear* and *Othello*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* claim for themselves without rival or competitor even from among the creatures of the same poet's brain. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the whole play,—and the same stands good of *Coriolanus* no less,—is to be found in Plutarch. Shakespeare indeed has thrown a rich mantle of poetry over all, which is often wholly his own; but of the incident there is almost nothing which he does not owe to Plutarch, even as continually he owes the very wording to Sir Thomas North.

It may be worth while a little more closely to follow this out. The play opens with the jealousy on the part of the tribunes at the marks of favour shown by the populace to Cæsar: this, down to the smallest details, is from Plutarch; so too in that which follows, the repeated offering by Antony of a crown to Cæsar at the Lupercalia, with his reluctant refusal of it; this blended indeed into one with an earlier tendering to him of special honours on the part of the senate; Cæsar's early suspicions in regard of 'the lean and wrinkled Cassius,' with his desire to have about him men fat and well-liking; the goading on of Brutus by Cassius, and the gradual drawing of him into the conspiracy, with the devices to this end; the deliberation whether Antony shall share in Cæsar's doom, and the false estimate of him which Brutus makes; so, too, whether Cicero shall be admitted to the plot, with the reasons for excluding him; the remonstrance of Portia that she is shut out from her husband's counsels, and the proof of courage which she gives; then, too, all the prodigies which precede the murder,—as the beast without a heart; fires in the element; men walking about clothed as in flame and unscorched by it; the ill-omened birds

sitting at noon-day in the market-place ; Calphurnia's warning dream, and Cæsar's consequent resolution not to go to the senate-house ; the talking of him over by Decius Brutus ; the vain attempt of Artemidorus to warn him of his danger ; the ides of March ; the apprehension at the last moment that all had been discovered, with the hasty purpose of Cassius, only hindered by Brutus, to kill himself thereupon ; the luring away of Antony from the senate-house by Trebonius ; the importunate pleading of Metellus Cimber for his brother, taken up by the other conspirators ; the striking of the first blow from behind by Casca ; Cæsar's ceasing to defend himself when he recognises Brutus among his murderers ; his falling down at the base of Pompey's statue, which ran blood ; the deceitful reconciliation of Antony with the conspirators ; nothing of this is absent. All too, which follows is from Plutarch : the funeral oration of Brutus over Cæsar's body, and then that which Antony has obtained leave to deliver ; the displaying of the rent and bloody mantle ; the reading of the will ; the rousing of the rury of the populace ; the tearing to pieces of Cinna the poet, mistaken for the conspirator of the same name ; the precipitate flight of the conspirators from the city ; their reappearance in arms in the East ; the meeting of Brutus and Cassius ; their quarrel, and Lucius Pella the cause of it ; the reconciliation ; the division of opinion as to military operations ; the giving way of Cassius, with his subsequent protest to Messala that he had only unwillingly done this ; the apparition of Cæsar's ghost to Brutus, with the announcement that he should see him again at Philippi ; the leave-taking of Brutus and Cassius, with the conversation on the Stoic doctrine of suicide between them ; the double issue of the battle ; the disastrous mistakes ; the death of Cassius by the sword which had slain Cæsar ; the ineffectual appeal of Brutus to three of his followers to kill him, a fourth at last consenting ; all this, with minor details innumerable, has been borrowed by Shakespeare from the *Lives* of Cæsar, of Brutus, and of Mark Antony ; which all have evidently been most carefully studied by him.

Yet for all this, Shakespeare does not abdicate his royal pre-eminence ; but resumes it at any moment that he pleases. Thus Plutarch tells us of that funeral oration by Mark Antony, how

“ To conclude his oration he unfolded before the whole assembly the bloody garments of the dead, thrust through in many places with their swords, and called the malefactors cruel and cursed murtherers.”

It is well said—a graphic touch ; but mark how Shakespeare has taken possession of it :—

“ You all do know this mantle ; I remember  
The first time ever Cæsar put it on ;  
'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent ;  
That day he overcame the Nervii.

---

Look ! in this place ran Cassius' dagger through :  
See what a rent the envious Casca made :  
Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabbed ;  
And, as he plucked his cursèd steel away,  
Mark how the blood of Cæsar followed it ;  
As rushing out of doors, to be resolved  
If Brutus so unkindly knocked, or no ;  
For Brutus, as you know, was Cæsar's angel."

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH, Archbishop of Dublin.—*Plutarch : his Life, his Lives and his Morals*, pp. 49—55.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the extract from this work given in connection with *Antony and Cleopatra*.

## JULIUS CÆSAR.

## ACT III.

SCENE II. *The Forum.*

ANTONY *and a throng of Citizens.*

*First Cit.* Stand from the hearse ; stand from the body.

*Sec. Cit.* Room for Antony, most noble Antony.

*Ant.* Nay, press not so upon me ; stand far off.

*Several Cit.* Stand back ; room ; bear back.

*Ant.* If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.

You all do know this mantle : I remember  
The first time ever Cæsar put it on ;  
'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent,  
That day he overcame the Nervii :  
Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through ;  
See what a rent the envious Casca made :  
Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd ;  
And as he pluck'd his cursèd steel away,  
Mark how the blood of Cæsar follow'd it,  
As rushing out of doors, to be resolved  
If Brutus so unkindly knock'd, or no ;

For Brutus, as you know, was Cæsar's angel :  
Judge, O you gods, how dearly Cæsar loved  
him !

This was the most unkindest cut of all ;  
For when the noble Cæsar saw him stab,  
Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,  
Quite vanquish'd him : then burst his mighty  
heart ;

And, in his mantle muffling up his face,  
Even at the base of Pompey's statue,  
Which all the while ran blood, great Cæsar fell.  
O, what a fall was there, my countrymen !  
Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,  
Whilst bloody treason flourish'd over us.

O, now you weep ; and, I perceive, you feel  
The dint of pity : these are gracious drops.  
Kind souls, what, weep you when you but behold  
Our Cæsar's vesture wounded ? Look you here,  
Here is himself, marr'd, as you see, with traitors.

*First Cit.* O piteous spectacle !

*Sec. Cit.* O noble Cæsar !

*Third Cit.* O woful day !

*Fourth Cit.* O traitors, villains !

*First Cit.* O most bloody sight !

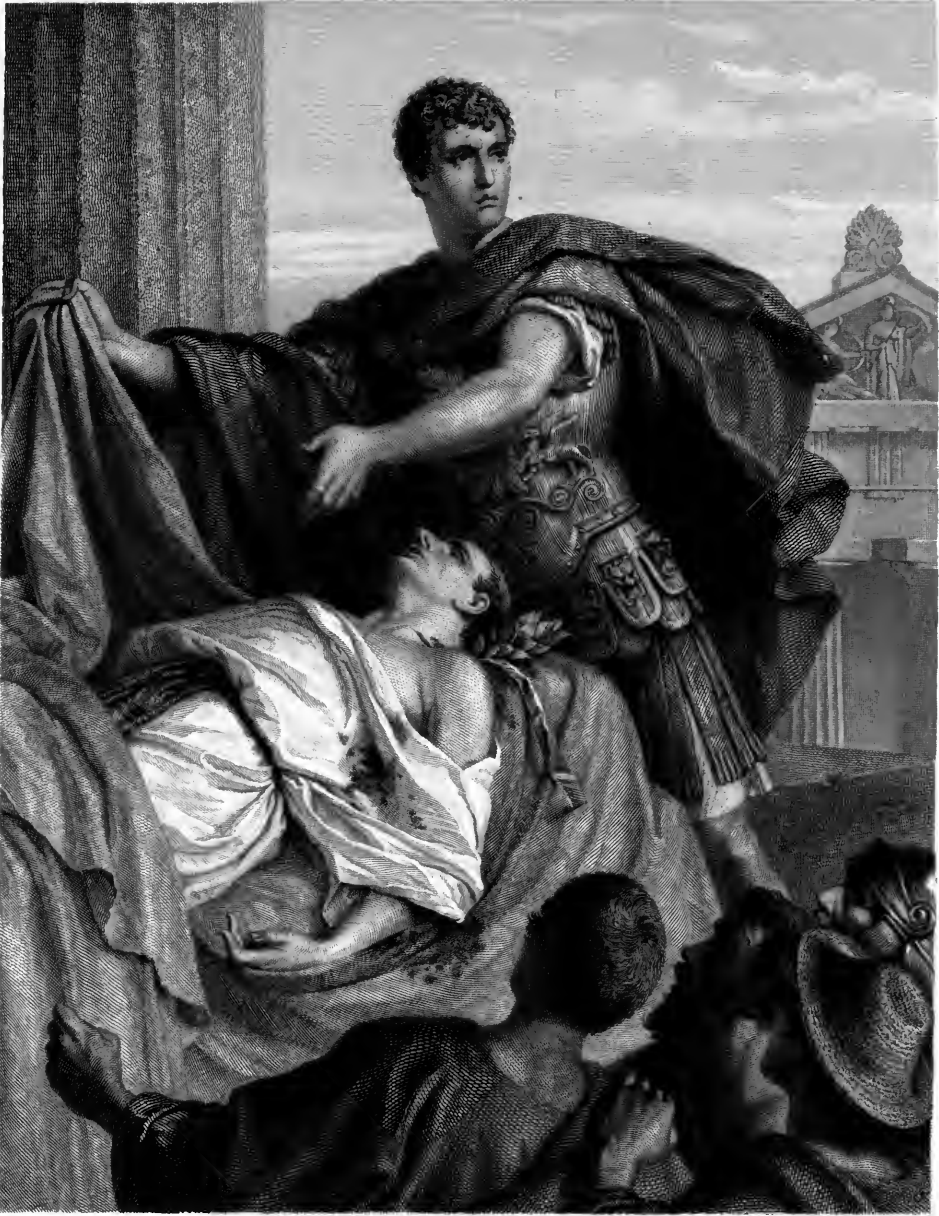
*Sec. Cit.* We will be revenged.

*All.* Revenge ! About ! Seek ! Burn ! Fire !  
Kill ! Slay ! Let not a traitor live !

## SHAKESPEARE'S ROMAN DRAMAS.

IN the three great Roman dramas, the idea, not personified, but full of a life that animates and informs every scene, is ROME. Some one said that Chantrey's bust of a great living poet was more like than the poet himself. Shakespeare's Rome, we venture to think, is more like than the Rome of the Romans. It is the idealised Rome, true indeed to her every-day features, but embodying that expression of character which belongs to the universal rather than the accidental. And yet how varied is the idea of Rome which the poet presents to us in these three great mirrors of her history ! In the young Rome of Coriolanus we see the terrible energy of her rising ambition checked and overpowered by the factious violence of her contending *classes*. We know that the prayer of Coriolanus is a vain prayer:—





Heinrich Spitz del.

J. Kraus sc.

Julius Caesar — Julius Caesar.



“ The honour'd gods  
 Keep Rome in safety, and the chairs of justice  
 Supplied with worthy men ! plant love among us !  
 Through our large temples with the shows of peace,  
 And not our streets with war ! ”

In the matured Rome of Julius Cæsar we see her riches and her glories about to be swallowed up in a domestic conflict of *principles* :—

“ Rome, thou hast lost the breed of noble bloods !  
 When went there by an age, since the great flood,  
 But it was famed with more than with one man ?  
 When could they say, till now, that talk'd of Rome,  
 That her wide walks encompass'd but one man ? ”

In the slightly older Rome of Antony, her power, her magnificence, are ready to perish in the selfishness of *individuals* :—

“ Let Rome in Tiber melt ! and the wide arch  
 Of the ranged empire fall ! ”

Rome was saved from anarchy by the supremacy of one. Shakespeare did not live to make the Cæsars immortal.

Schlegel has observed that “ these plays are the very thing itself ; and, under the apparent artlessness of adhering closely to history as he [Shakespeare] found it, an uncommon degree of art is concealed.” The poet almost invariably follows Plutarch, as translated by North, sometimes even to the literal adoption of the biographer's words. This is the “ apparent artlessness.” But Schlegel has also shown us the principles of the “ uncommon art : ”—“ Of every historical transaction, Shakespeare knows how to seize the true poetical point of view, and to give unity and rounding to a series of events detached from the unmeasurable extent of history, without in any degree changing them.” But he adopts the literal only when it enters into “ the true poetical point of view,” and is therefore in harmony with the general poetical truth, which in many subordinate particulars necessarily discards all pretension of “ adhering closely to history.” Jonson has left us two Roman plays produced essentially upon a different principle. In his *Sejanus* there is scarcely a speech or an incident that is not derived from the ancient authorities ; and Jonson's own edition of the play is crowded with references as minute as would have been required from any modern annalist. In his Address to the Readers, he says :—“ Lest in some nice nostril the quotations might savour affected, I do let you know that I abhor nothing more ; and I have only done it to show my integrity in the story.” The character of the dramatist's mind, as well as the abundance of his learning, determined this mode of proceeding : but it is evident that he worked upon a false principle of art.

His characters are, therefore, puppets carved and stuffed according to the descriptions, and made to speak according to the very words of Tacitus and Suetonius; but they are not living men. It is the same in his *Catiline*. Cicero is the great actor in that play; and he moves as Sallust, corrected by other authorities, made him move; and speaks as he spoke himself in his own orations. Jonson gives the whole of Cicero's first oration against Catiline, in a translation amounting to some three hundred lines. It may be asked, What can we have that may better present Cicero to us than the descriptions of the Roman historians, and Cicero's own words? We answer, six lines of Shakspeare, no found in the books :—

“ The angry spot doth glow on Caesar's brow,  
And all the rest look like a chidden train :  
Calphurnia's cheek is pale ; and Cicero  
Looks with such ferret and such fiery eyes,  
As we have seen him in the Capitol,  
Being cross'd in conference with some senators.”

Gifford, speaking of Jonson's two Roman tragedies, says : “ He has apparently succeeded in his principal object, which was to exhibit the characters of the drama to the spectators of his days precisely as they appeared to those of their own. The plan was scholastic, but it was not judicious. The difference between the *dramatis personæ* and the spectators was too wide; and the very accuracy to which he aspired would seem to take away much of the power of pleasing. Had he drawn men instead of Romans his success might have been more assured.” We presume to think that there is here a slight confusion of terms. If Jonson had succeeded in his principal object, and *had* exhibited his characters precisely as they *appeared* in their own days, his representation would have been the truth. But he has drawn, according to this intelligent critic, Romans instead of men, and therefore his success was not perfectly assured. Not drawing *men*, he did not draw his characters as they appeared in their own days: but as he pieced out their supposed appearance from incidental descriptions or formal characterisations—from party historians or prejudiced rhetoricians. If he had drawn *Romans* as they were, he would have drawn *men* as they were. They were not the less men because they were Romans. He failed to draw the men, principally on account of the limited range of his imaginative power; he copied instead of created. He repeated, says Gifford, “the ideas, the language, the allusions” which “could only be readily caught by the contemporaries of Augustus and Tiberius.” He gave us, partly on this account also, shadows of life, instead of the “living features of an age so distant from our own,” as his biographer yet thinks he gave. Shakspeare worked upon different principles, and certainly with a different success.

CHARLES KNIGHT.—*Studies of Shakspeare* (1851), pp. 404—406.

## THE DEATH OF JULIUS CÆSAR.

THE death of Julius Cæsar is perhaps the most central incident in the political history of the world ; it is placed in time at the conclusion of one great series of events and at the commencement of another, most strikingly contrasted and dividing between them the general course of events, which, as the body of ancient history, stands in the closest connection with modern, its proper offspring and inheritor. . . . The dictatorship of Cæsar is the confluence of all the great dominations that had swayed in scattered succession around the shores of the Mediterranean. Vast as are the differences between Phœnician, Egyptian, Jewish, Assyrian, Persian, Greek, Lydian, Etruscan, and Roman powers and civilisations, the development of each has so much affinity with every one of the others, whether from common origin, primeval or later intercourse and collision, and direct or intermediate influence, that their monuments, literature and history evince a certain transcendental community that unites them as members of a central group among the nations of the world. . . . The empire, of which the general limits were fixed or indicated by the achievements of Cæsar, and the form of autocratical government, which he distinctly aimed at and assumed, continued for long centuries, and form a second division of the history of ancient Europe and adjacent regions, in their most active and intimately connected portions. The great change in religious opinions and associations, which gave a common creed to the whole empire, was, no doubt, to a great extent, the concluding phase of a sympathetic tendency, as much as the political catastrophe ; but it was also, to some extent, a consequence of it and necessary complement.

It is difficult, therefore, not to regard Julius Cæsar as the instrument of most efficiently hastening onward and completing a destined conclusion ; and to deny his consciousness of his great office in the course of Fate, would but give occasion for ascription to him of the higher dignity of elected inspiration. From this point of view, the banded aristocracy, who surround and strike him down with sudden daggers at the very crisis of his career, are traitors every way to Cæsar and to the world ; and futile in their treachery, hoping to stay the wheel of destiny by a surprise, to divert it by a chicane. But on the other hand are arrayed all the respects and considerations that, from the hour of their deed down to the present, have given them place and glory in the esteem of so many of the noblest, as the grandest of all examples of patriotic daring and devotion. Whatever there is of magnanimity in Cæsar may be paralleled among his slayers, even in the conduct of their bloody deed ; and what are their political misdeeds that are not counterbalanced by those of their victim in the sustained course of intrigue, systematic corruption, and regardless violence, with which he pursued an end of arrogant

selfishness, and did all in his power to aggravate the confusion and disorder of social right, on the recovery of which he founds his claim for not only impunity but honour. . . .

Cæsar, however, by his mere qualifications and position, apart from his passions, was in immediate sympathy with the demand of the preceding movement of the world. Since the era of Coriolanus the people of Rome have become degraded into a base populace, incapable of the dignity of a people, and the ready prey of the first ambitious man, who has the genius to cajole and corrupt them, for the acquirement of a power which he will retain by merciless coercion. In *Coriolanus*, the last excesses of internal dissension are prevented by a certain forbearance on the part of the mob and the tribunes in the midst of their success, no less than on the part of the patricians. But with the progress of corruption this moral restraint is lost on either side, and the ranks of the aristocracy furnish the leaders, who stimulate the mob to the destruction of the nobles, or who purchase their aid to seize upon the absolute sway of the state by liberal donation from the spoil, and at last induce the confusion which nothing but perpetual dictatorship can regulate. Still it is ignorance that is the main cause of the errors of the easily misled populace; they are still, as of yore, susceptible of authoritative rebuke, or even compassionate appeal; but they are utterly incapable of steady election or moral judgment, and therefore as readily excitable to any caprice of weakness, cruelty, or rage. Hence the course of events, like a favourable set of current, carries Cæsar onward to absolute power, but at the same time opens the inevitable temptation to unscrupulous aid by every ambitious act and artifice, till the end is reached by triumph over civil blood; triumph through the streets of Rome over him, who had triumphed there before so frequently more purely and patriotically; by the support of robbers, by flagrant piracy on the high seas of political adventure.

On the other hand, while the conspiring nobles, taken at their best, and there is worse along with them, endeavour to roll back the universe with sore impeachment of their judgment, and resort to means which the most promising hopes could neither dignify nor sanction, yet, withal, in virtue of their purer and better motives and their cause, they achieve a commendation and a glory that almost excuses their faults, and entirely compensates defeat.

W. W. LLOYD.—*Essays on the Life and Plays of Shakespeare* (1858): "*Julius Cæsar*."

### THE CHARACTER OF BRUTUS.

SHAKESPEARE'S tragedy centres wholly in the character of Brutus; it has even been represented as an error that the play is not named *Marcus Brutus* instead of *Julius Cæsar*. But if Brutus be the hero of the piece, its subject is Cæsar, his power and his

death. Cæsar alone occupies the dramatic foreground ; the horror caused by his power, the need of finding deliverance from it, fill the first half of the drama ; the second half is devoted to his memory, and to the consequences of his death. It is, as Antony has said "Cæsar's spirit ranging for revenge ;" and that his predominance should not be lost sight of or misconceived, it is Cæsar's spirit which, on the plains of Sardis and of Philippi, appears as his evil genius to Brutus.

With the death of Brutus, however, the delineation of this great catastrophe must end. Shakespeare cared to interest us in the chief event of the play only so far as the character of Brutus was related to it ; and in like manner, he exhibits Brutus only in relation to the event. The deed which supplied a theme for the tragedy and the character which effected that deed, the death of Cæsar and the character of Brutus—it is the union of these which constitutes the dramatic work of Shakespeare, as the union of soul and body constitutes life, elements alike and equally necessary to the existence of the individual man. Previous to the conspiracy for Cæsar's death the piece does not begin ; after Brutus's death it ends.

It is then in the character of Brutus, the soul of the play, that the peculiar impress of Shakespeare's genius may be discerned. The picture is the more admirable inasmuch as the poet, while remaining faithful to history has yet brought into being an original creation ; the Brutus of Plutarch appears as truly, and as completely in the scenes invented by the dramatist, as in those furnished to his hand by the historian. This meditative spirit, for ever absorbed in self-questoning, the trouble of a strict conscience upon the first suggestion of a yet doubtful duty, the calm and unwavering firmness as soon as that duty is ascertained, the profound and almost painful sensitiveness, constantly restrained by the rigour of the austere principles, a gentleness of nature which does not for a moment disappear in the midst of the most cruel tasks imposed by a masculine virtue,—in a word, the character of Brutus, as we all conceive it, moves with perfect and living coherency through the various scenes of his life, and precisely as we must believe it actually appeared.

Perhaps it is this historical fidelity which has been the cause of the coldness of Shakespearean critics towards the play of *Julius Cæsar*. They do not perceive in it the workings of that almost wild originality which rivet our attention in the dramas of Shakespeare that deal with modern themes, and which are as remote from the actual conduct of our life as from the classical ideas in accordance with which the processes of our imagination have been formed. Hotspur's manners are certainly much more original, in our eyes, than the manners of Brutus ; they are so in themselves ; the greatness of human character in the middle ages is notable for its individuality ; that of the ancients rises, in regular manner, upon the basis of certain general principles, which in various individuals hardly differ in any particular except in the height to which they may attain. Such was Shake-

speare's feeling, and such was the fact ; accordingly he has thought, not of rendering the character of Brutus singular, but only of giving it elevation. Placed on a lower level, the other personages in some degree possess the freedom of individual character, dispensing, as they do, with that rule of perfection which duty has laid upon Brutus. The poet seems to play around them with less of reverence, and to allow himself to attribute to them some characteristics which properly belong less to them than to himself. Cassius scornfully comparing Cæsar's physical strength with his own, and traversing by night the streets of Rome, while the tempest is at its height, to allay that fever which consumes him, resembles far more a countryman of Canute or Harold than a Roman of the time of Cæsar ; but this barbaric complexion lends an interest to the irregularities of Cassius's conduct, which could not perhaps be obtained as fully by historical verisimilitude. Schlegel, whose judgments on Shakespeare always deserve respectful consideration, seems to me to fall into an error—though not an error of grave importance—when he observes that the poet has “with fine skill indicated the advantage conferred on Cassius by a stronger will and a juster perception of events.” On the contrary, I believe that Shakespeare's admirable art consists, in this play, in preserving for the principal personage his full superiority, even when he errs, and in making it apparent by the very fact that he is in error, and yet that the others defer to him, that their reason yields to Brutus's mistaken judgment and yields without distrust. Brutus is even for once morally in the wrong ; in the quarrel scene with Cassius, overcome for one moment by a terrible, secret grief, he forgets his habitual and becoming moderation ; Brutus is in the wrong ; yet it is Cassius who humbles himself, for Brutus has indeed been nobler than he.

GUIZOT.—*Shakespeare et son Temps* (1852), pp. 243—246.

### THE CHARACTER OF ANTONY.

ANTONY is a man of genius without moral fibre ; a nature of a rich, sensitive, pleasure-loving kind ; the prey of good impulses and of bad ; looking on life as a game in which he has a distinguished part to play, and playing that part with magnificent grace and skill. He is capable of personal devotion (though not of devotion to an idea), and has indeed a gift for subordination,—subordination to a Julius Cæsar, to a Cleopatra. And as he has enthusiasm about great personalities, so he has a contempt for inefficiency and ineptitude. Lepidus is to him “a slight unmeritable man meet to be sent on errands,” one that is to be talked of not as a person, but as a property. Antony possesses no constancy of self-esteem ; he can drop quickly out of favour with himself ; and being without reverence for his own type of character, and being endowed with a fine versatility of perception



and feeling, he can admire qualities the most remote from his own. It is Antony who utters the *éloge* over the body of Brutus at Philippi. Antony is not without an æsthetic sense and imagination, though of a somewhat unspiritual kind: he does not judge men by a severe moral code, but he feels, in an æsthetic way, the grace, the splendour, the piteous interest of the actors in the exciting drama of life, or their impertinence, ineptitude, and comicality; and he feels that the play is poorer by the loss of so noble a figure as that of a Brutus. But Brutus, over whom his ideals dominate, and who is blind to facts which are not in harmony with his theory of the universe, is quite unable to perceive the power for good or for evil that is lodged in Antony, and there is in the great figure of Antony nothing which can engage or interest his imagination; for Brutus's view of life is not imaginative, or pictorial, or dramatic; but wholly ethical. The fact that Antony abandons himself to pleasure, "is gamesome," reduces him in the eyes of Brutus to a very ordinary person,—one who is silly or stupid enough not to recognise the first principle of human conduct, the need of self-mastery; one against whom the laws of the world must fight, and who is therefore of no importance. And Brutus was right with respect to the ultimate issues for Antony. Sooner or later Antony must fall to ruin. But before the moral defect in Antony's nature destroyed his fortune much was to happen. Before Actium might come Philippi.

EDWARD DOWDEN.—*Shakspeare, his Mind and Art* (1875), pp. 289—290.

## HAMLET.

## ACT V.

SCENE I. *A Churchyard.*

*First Clown.* Here's a skull, now ; this skull has lain in the earth three and twenty years.

*Hamlet.* Whose was it ?

*First Clo.* A whoreson mad fellow's it was : whose do you think it was ?

*Ham.* Nay, I know not.

*First Clo.* A pestilence on him for a mad rogue ! a' poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

*Ham.* This ?

*First Clo.* E'en that.

*Ham.* Let me see. [*Takes the skull.*] Alas, poor Yorick ! I knew him, Horatio : a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy : he hath borne me on his back a thousand times ; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is ! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now ? your gambols ? your songs ? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar ? Not one now to mock your own grinning ? quite chap-fallen ? Now get you

to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come ; make her laugh at that. Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

*Horatio.* What's that, my lord ?

*Ham.* Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i' the earth ?

*Hor.* E'en so.

*Ham.* And smelt so ? pah !

[*Puts down the skull.*]

*Hor.* E'en so, my lord.

*Ham.* To what base uses we may return, Horatio ! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till it find it stopping a bung-hole ?

*Hor.* 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

*Ham.* No, faith, not a jot ; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it : as thus : Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust ; the dust is earth ; of earth we make loam ; and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel ?

Imperious Cæsar, dead and turn'd to clay,

Might stop a hole to keep the wind away :

O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,  
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw !

CHARACTER OF HAMLET.<sup>1</sup>

## I.

“HAMLET,” was the play, or rather Hamlet himself was the character, in the intuition and exposition of which I first made my turn for philosophical criticism, and especially for insight into the genius of Shakespeare, noticed. . . . The seeming inconsistencies in the conduct and character of Hamlet have long exercised the conjectural ingenuity of critics ; and

<sup>1</sup> It has seemed better to present the celebrated passages on Hamlet's character from Coleridge, Goethe, and Schlegel—the sources of much subsequent criticism—rather than the more recent views of writers who ingeniously but without success attempt

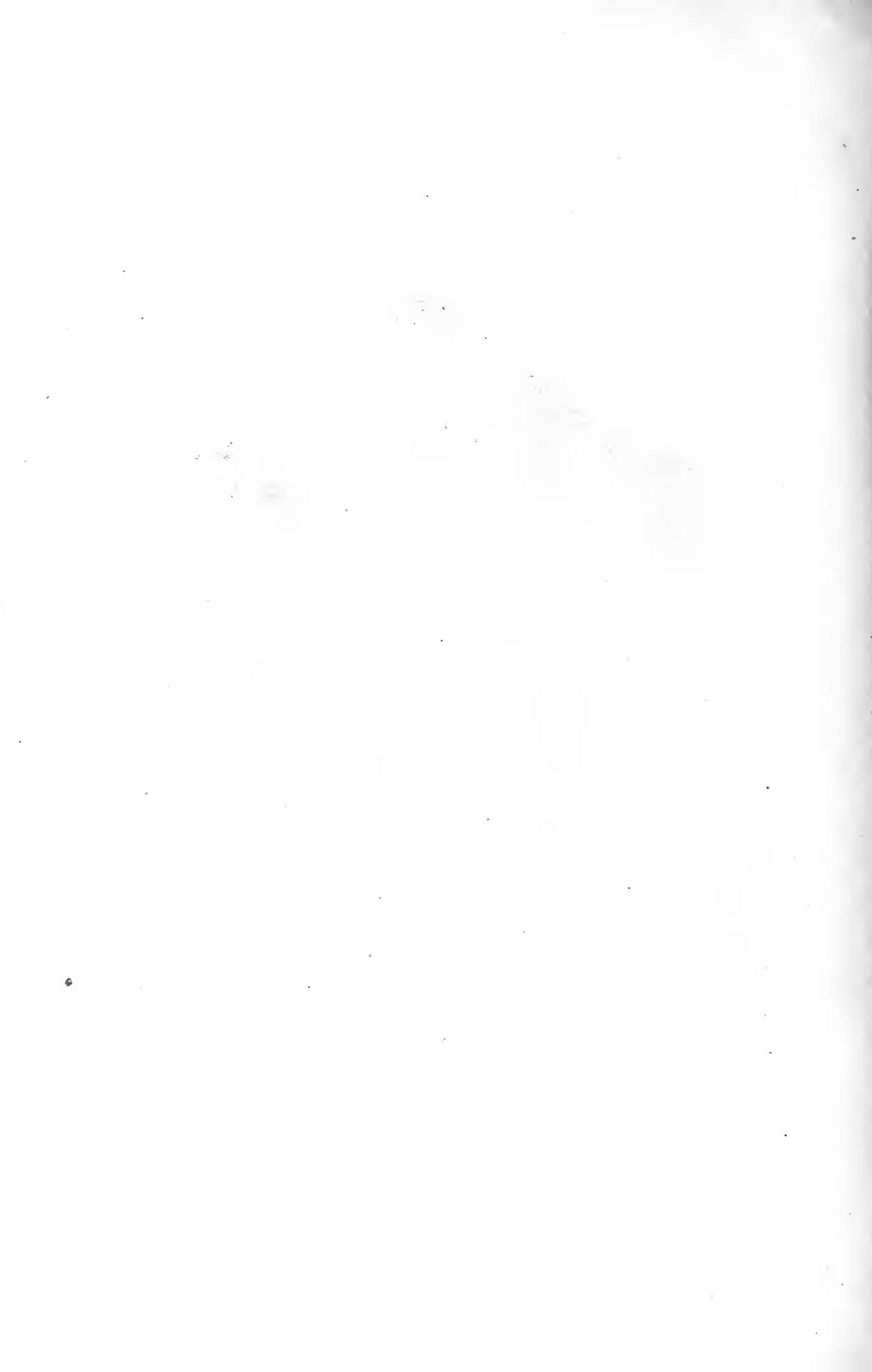
to delineate Hamlet as a sane and vigorous man of action. The views given here are keenly contested by the latest German critic—Karl Werder—in his *Vorlesungen über Shakespeare's Hamlet* (Berlin, 1875).



W. Scott del.

J. Stoddard sc.

Hamlet - Hamlet.



as we are always loth to suppose that the cause of defective apprehension is in ourselves, the mystery has been too commonly explained by the very easy process of setting it down as in fact inexplicable, and by resolving the phenomenon into a misgrowth or *lusus* of the capricious and irregular genius of Shakespeare. The shallow and stupid arrogance of these vulgar and indolent decisions I would fain do my best to expose. I believe the character of Hamlet may be traced to Shakespeare's deep and accurate science in mental philosophy. Indeed, that this character must have some connection with the common fundamental laws of our nature may be assumed from the fact that Hamlet has been the darling of every country in which the literature of England has been fostered. In order to understand him, it is essential that we should reflect on the constitution of our own minds. Man is distinguished from the brute animals in proportion as thought prevails over sense: but in the healthy processes of the mind, a balance is constantly maintained between the impressions from outward objects and the inward operations of the intellect;—for if there be an overbalance in the contemplative faculty, man thereby becomes the creature of mere meditation, and loses his natural power of action. Now one of Shakespeare's modes of creating characters is, to conceive any one intellectual or moral faculty in morbid excess, and then to place himself—Shakespeare—thus mutilated or diseased, under given circumstances. In *Hamlet* he seems to have wished to exemplify the moral necessity of a due balance between our attention to the objects of our senses and our meditation on the workings of our minds—an equilibrium between the real and the imaginary worlds. In Hamlet this balance is disturbed: his thoughts and the images of his fancy are far more vivid than his actual perceptions, and his very perceptions, instantly passing through the *medium* of his contemplations, acquire as they pass a form and a colour not naturally their own. Hence we see a great, an almost enormous, intellectual activity, and a proportionate aversion to real action, consequent upon it, with all its symptoms and accompanying qualities. This character Shakespeare places in circumstances under which it is obliged to act on the spur of the moment:—Hamlet is brave and careless of death; but he vacillates from sensibility, and procrastinates from thought, and loses the power of action in the energy of resolve. Thus it is that this tragedy presents a direct contrast to that of *Macbeth*; the one proceeds with the utmost slowness, the other with a crowded and breathless rapidity.

The effect of this overbalance of the imaginative power is beautifully illustrated in the everlasting broodings and superfluous activities of Hamlet's mind, which, unseated from its healthy relation, is constantly occupied with the world within, and abstracted from the world without,—giving substance to shadows, and throwing a mist over all commonplace actualities. It is the nature of thought to be indefinite;—definiteness belongs to external imagery alone. Hence it is, that the sense of sublimity arises, not from the sight of an outward object, but from the beholder's reflection upon it;—not

from the sensuous impression, but from the imaginative reflex. Few men have seen a celebrated waterfall without feeling something akin to disappointment: it is only subsequently that the image comes back full into the mind, and brings with it a train of grand or beautiful associations. Hamlet feels this; his senses are in a state of trance, and he looks upon external things as hieroglyphics. His soliloquy—

“O! that this too, too solid flesh would melt,” &c.—

springs from that craving after the indefinite—for that which is not—which most easily besets men of genius; and the self-delusion common to this temper of mind is finely exemplified in the character which Hamlet gives of himself:—

“It cannot be  
But I am pigeon-liver'd, and lack gall  
To make oppression bitter.”

He mistakes the seeing his chains for the breaking them, delays action till action is of no use, and dies the victim of mere circumstance and accident.

S. T. COLERIDGE.—*Shakspeare Notes and Lectures* (ed. 1874), pp. 201—4.

## II.<sup>1</sup>

I SET about investigating every trace of Hamlet's character, as it had shown itself before his father's death: I endeavoured to distinguish what in it was independent of this mournful event; independent of the terrible events that followed; and what, most probably, the young man would have been had no such thing occurred.

Soft, and from a noble stem, this royal flower had sprung up under the immediate influences of majesty: the idea of moral rectitude with that of princely elevation, the feeling of the good and dignified with the consciousness of high birth, had in him been unfolded simultaneously. He was a prince, by birth a prince; and he wished to reign only that good men might be good without obstruction. Pleasing in form, polished by nature, courteous from the heart, he was meant to be the pattern of youth and the joy of the world. . . . Conceive a prince such as I have painted him, and that his father suddenly dies. Ambition and the love of rule are not the passions that inspire him. As a king's son he would have been contented; but now he is first constrained to consider the difference which separates a sovereign from a subject. The crown was not hereditary, yet a longer possession of it by his father would have strengthened the pretensions of an only son, and secured his hopes of the succession. In place of this, he now beholds

<sup>1</sup> The following extract is from the study of Hamlet put into the mouth of Goethe's Wilhelm Meister.

himself excluded by his uncle, in spite of specious promises, most probably for ever. He is now poor in goods and favour, and a stranger in the scene which from youth he had looked on as his inheritance. His temper here assumes its first mournful tinge. He feels that now he is not more, that he is less than a private nobleman; he offers himself as the servant of every one; he is not courteous and condescending, he is needy and degraded. His past condition he remembers as a vanished dream. It is in vain that his uncle strives to cheer him, to present his situation in another point of view. The feeling of his nothingness will not leave him.

The second stroke that came upon him wounded deeper, bowed still more. It was the marriage of his mother. The faithful tender son had yet a mother, when his father passed away. He hoped, in the company of his surviving noble-minded parent, to reverence the heroic form of the departed; but his mother too he loses, and it is something worse than death that robs him of her. The trustful image, which a good child loves to form of its parents, is gone. With the dead there is no help; on the living no hold. She also is a woman, and her name is Frailty, like that of all her sex.

Now first does he feel himself completely bent and orphaned; and no happiness of life can repay what he has lost. Not reflective or sorrowful by nature, reflection and sorrow have become for him a heavy obligation. It is thus that we see him first enter on the scene. . . . The hero in this case is endowed more properly with sentiments than with a character; it is events alone that push him on; and accordingly the piece has in some measure the expansion of a novel. But as it is Fate that draws the plan, as the story issues from a deed of terror, and the hero is continually driven forward to a deed of terror, the work is tragic in the highest sense, and admits of no other than a tragic end.

GOETHE.—*Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (Carlyle's Translation),  
Vol. I. pp. 178; 199—200; 249.

### III.

HAMLET is singular in its kind: a tragedy of thought inspired by continual and never-satisfied meditation on human destiny and the dark perplexity of the events of this world, and calculated to call forth the very same meditation in the minds of the spectators. This enigmatical work resembles those irrational equations in which a fraction of unknown magnitude always remains that will in no way admit of solution. Much has been said, much written on this piece, and yet no thinking head who anew expresses himself on it, will (in his view of the connection and signification of all the parts) entirely coincide with his predecessors. What naturally most astonishes us, is the fact that with such

hidden purposes, with a foundation laid in such unfathomable depth, the whole should, at a first view, exhibit an extremely popular appearance. The dread appearance of the ghost takes possession of the mind and the imagination almost at the very commencement; then the play within the play, in which, as in a glass, we see reflected the crime, whose fruitlessly attempted punishment constitutes the subject-matter of the piece; the alarm with which it fills the king; Hamlet's pretended and Ophelia's real madness; her death and burial; the meeting of Hamlet and Laertes at her grave; their combat, and the grand determination; lastly, the appearance of the young hero Fortinbras, who, with warlike pomp, pays the last honours to an extinct family of kings; the interspersion of comic characteristic scenes with Polonius, the courtiers, and the grave-diggers, which have all of them their signification—all this fills the stage with an animated and varied movement. The only circumstance from which this piece might be judged to be less theatrical than other tragedies of Shakspeare is, that in the last scenes the main action either stands still or appears to retrograde. This, however, was inevitable, and lay in the nature of the subject. The whole is intended to show that a calculating consideration, which exhausts all the relations and possible consequences of a deed, must cripple the power of acting; as Hamlet himself expresses it:—

“ And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;  
And enterprises of great pith and moment,  
With this regard, their currents turn awry,  
And lose the name of action.”

With respect to Hamlet's character: I cannot, as I understand the poet's views, pronounce altogether so favourable a sentence upon it as Goethe does. He is, it is true, of a highly cultivated mind, a prince of royal manners, endowed with the finest sense of propriety, susceptible of noble ambition, and open in the highest degree to an enthusiastic admiration of that excellence in others of which he himself is deficient. He acts the part of madness with unrivalled power, convincing the persons who are sent to examine into his supposed loss of reason, merely telling them unwelcome truths, and rallying them with the most caustic wit. But in the resolutions which he so often embraces and always leaves unexecuted, his weakness is too apparent: he does himself only justice when he implies that there is no greater dissimilarity than between himself and Hercules. He is not solely impelled by necessity to artifice and dissimulation, he has a natural inclination for crooked ways; he is a hypocrite towards himself; his far-fetched scruples are often mere pretexts to cover his want of determination; thoughts, as he says on a different occasion, which have

“ But one part wisdom  
And ever three parts coward.”



He has been chiefly condemned both for his harshness in repulsing the love of Ophelia, which he himself had cherished, and for his insensibility at her death. But he is too much overwhelmed with his own sorrow to have any compassion to spare for others; besides, his outward indifference gives us by no means the measure of his inward perturbation. On the other hand, we evidently perceive in him a malicious joy, when he has succeeded in getting rid of his enemies, more through necessity and accident, which alone are able to impel him to quick and decisive measures, than by the merit of his own courage, as he himself confesses after the murder of Polonius, and with respect to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. (Hamlet has no firm belief either in himself or in anything else: from expressions of religious confidence he passes over to sceptical doubts; he believes in the Ghost of his father as long as he sees it, but as soon as it has disappeared, it appears to him almost in the light of a deception.<sup>1</sup>) He has even gone so far as to say, "There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so;" with him the poet loses himself here in labyrinths of thought, in which neither end nor beginning are discoverable. The stars themselves, from the course of events, afford no answer to the question so urgently proposed to them. [A voice from another world commissioned, it would appear, by heaven, demands vengeance for a monstrous enormity, and the demand remains without effect; the criminals are at last punished, but, as it were, by an accidental blow, and not in the solemn way requisite to convey to the world a warning example of justice; irresolute foresight, cunning treachery, and impetuous rage, hurry on to a common destruction; the less guilty and the innocent are equally involved in the general ruin. The destiny of humanity is there exhibited as a gigantic sphinx, which threatens to precipitate into the abyss of scepticism all who are unable to solve her dreadful enigmas.]

A. W. SCHLEGEL.—*Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, translated by John Black (1846), pp. 404—406.

### THE CHURCHYARD SCENE.

As to the scene in which the clowns are digging Ophelia's grave, with that indifference of custom which sports with the setting when the pearl is broken and gone, we may say that this scene sinks its shafts too far into the depths for the drama of Greece, of Rome, of Spain, of Italy, of France; but in the English drama it appears marvellously fitted to the meditative and philosophical genius of that nation. It is Bossuet in action with his supreme contempt for the vanity of human life; it is Pascal uttering the supreme cry

<sup>1</sup> It has been censured as a contradiction, that Hamlet in the soliloquy on self-murder should say,

"The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn  
No traveller returns."

For was not the Ghost a returned traveller? Shakspeare, however, purposely wished to show, that Hamlet could not fix himself in any conviction of any kind whatever.

over the wretchedness of man; the mockery of death and of despair, the self-ridicule occasioned by the presence of man who to-day triumphs and to-morrow will be a relic of his own nothingness! It is impossible to advance farther into the barren gloom. To search into the earth of the churchyard in order to claim from it the foulness of the corpse which was a great man yesterday; to utter the word, cruel but just, concerning *that which is nameless henceforth in any speech or language of man*; to enounce this word, not by the tongue of a priest or a philosopher, but by the lips, frankly coarse and vulgar, of a hard-handed clown; to discover philosophy and seize upon it, when embodied in the instinctive cry of nature, and in the broad laughter of the careless and indifferent; this,—and especially at twenty years of age,—is the sovereign token of genius.<sup>1</sup>

A. DE LAMARTINE.—*Shakespeare et son Œuvre* (1865), pp. 217—18.

### HAMLET'S HUMOUR CONNECTED WITH HIS MELANCHOLY.

THERE is an apparent inconsistency between the sombre melancholy of Hamlet's solitary thoughts and the jesting levity of his conversation, even when he seeks least to put on the guise of antic behaviour; an inconsistency apparent only, for in truth this gloomy reverie, which in solitude "runs darkling down the stream of fate," is thoroughly coherent in nature with the careless mocking spirit playing in derisive contempt with the foibles of others. The weeping and the mocking philosopher are not usually divided as of old, but are united in one, whose laugh is bestowed on the vanity of human wishes as observed in the world around, while the earnest tear is reserved for the more deeply felt miseries of his own destiny. The historian of melancholy himself was a philosopher of this complexion. Deeply imbued with melancholy when his mental gaze was introverted, when employed upon others it was more mocking than serious, more minute than profound. Thence came the charming and learned gossip of the *Anatomy*; thence also the curious habit recorded of him, that for days together he would sit on a post by the river-side, listening and laughing at the oaths and jeers of the boatmen, and thus finding a strange solace for his own profound melancholy. Here is his own evidence:—"Humorous they (melancholiacs) are beyond measure; sometimes profusely laughing, extraordinary merry, and then again weeping without a cause; groaning, sighing, pensive, sad, almost distracted, restless in their thoughts and actions, continually meditating.

" 'Velut ægri somnia, vane  
Finguntur species;'

<sup>1</sup> Lamartine fell into the strange error of sup-  
posing that Shakspeare wrote the play of *Hamlet*

in 1584, and that by 1586 it had established his  
reputation.

More like dreamers than men awake, they feign a company of antick fantastical conceits."

There is an intimate relationship between melancholy and humour. The fact is finely touched in the Yorick of Lawrence Sterne, and, what is more to the purpose, in the real history of many of the most celebrated humorists; and the truth even descends to those humorists of action, theatrical clowns. Who has not heard the story of one of the most celebrated of these applying incognito to a physician for the relief of melancholy, and being referred for a remedy to his own laughter-moving antics? Not that humour is always attended by any tinge or tendency to melancholy, as the plenitude of this faculty exhibited by jolly Sir John fully proves. Still there is this in common to the roustering humour of Falstaff, the melancholy humour of Jaques, and the sarcastic humour of Hamlet, that they have each a perverse ingenuity in contemplating the weakness and selfishness of human motive. Wit deals with ideas and their verbal representations; humour with motives and emotions; and that melancholy cast of thought, which tends to exhibit our own motives in an unfavourable light, is apt to probe the motives of others with searching insight, and to represent them in those unexpected contrasts, and those true but unusual colours which tickle the intelligence with their novelty and strangeness.

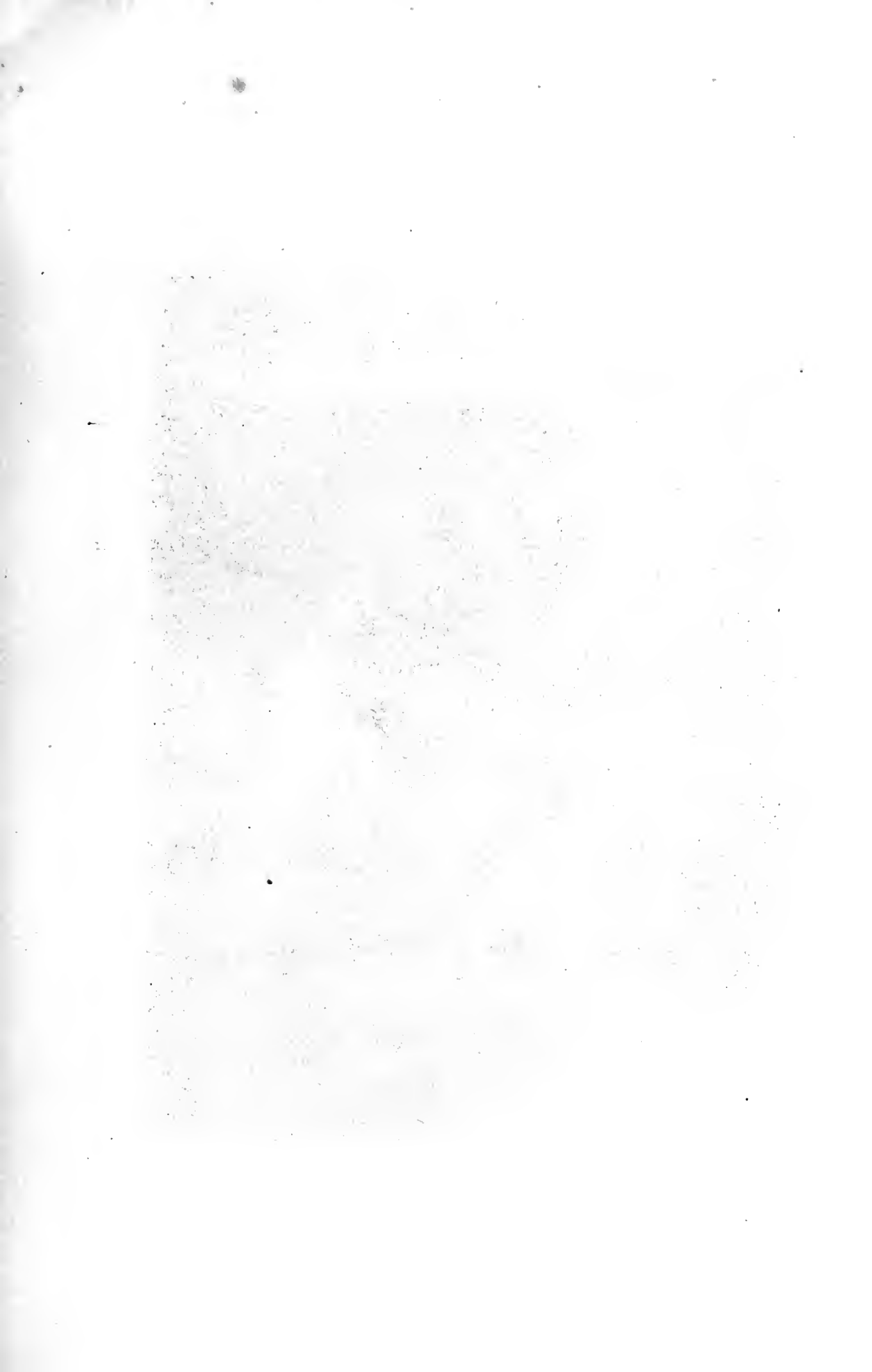
Dr. J. C. BUCKNILL.—*The Mad Folk of Shakespeare* (1867), pp. 127—129.

## HAMLET AND SHAKESPEARE.

FROM the evidence of his Sonnets and of different plays—indeed, from the character of Hamlet himself—there can be no doubt that Shakspeare was at one time much tried, disheartened and oppressed by the harsh experiences of life; he began, doubtless, as many others have done, by thinking life "a Paradise," and found it, as others have done, "only a Vauxhall." But as Goethe advanced from the storminess of Werther to the calmness of Faust, so did Shakspeare rise in a glorious development from the subjective character of Timon to that lofty and pure region of clear vision from which he contemplated the actions of men with infinite calmness. His practical life was correspondent; by bending his actions to the yoke of his intellectual life—by living, in fact, his philosophy—he was able to work steadily in the painful sphere of his vocation to the end which he had proposed to himself. If Hamlet is a reflex of Shakspeare's character, it reflects a period ere it had attained to its full development—a stage in which the struggle between the feeling of the painful experiences of life and the intellectual appreciation of them as events was actively going on—in which his nature was not yet in harmony with itself; but the crowning development of his philosophy seems to have been to look on

all events with a serene and passionless gaze as inevitable effects of antecedent causes—to be nowise moved by the vices of men, and to see in their virtues the evolution of their nature. It is a probable conjecture which has been made, therefore, that *Hamlet* was sketched out at an earlier period of his life than that at which it was published, and that it was kept by him for some time and much modified, the soliloquies and large generalizations being some of them perhaps thus introduced, and the action of the play thereby delayed. The Hamlet of his youth may thus have been alloyed with a more advanced philosophy, and a character progressively elaborated which seems almost overweighted with intellectual preponderance. If this be so, it may account for the strange circumstance, that at the beginning of the play Hamlet is represented as wishing to go back to school at Wittenburg, when, as the graveyard scene proves, he must have been about thirty years of age.

Dr. HENRY MAUDSLEY.—*Hamlet*, an Essay printed in *Body and Mind, &c.*  
(1873), pp. 192—194.





W. Schmidt sc.

J. B. Steiner del.

Mary für Mary - Mause für Mause.

## MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

## ACT. II.

SCENE IV. *A Room in ANGELO'S House.*

*Angelo.* But mark me ;  
To be received plain, I'll speak more gross :  
Your brother is to die.

*Isabel.* So.

*Ang.* And his offence is so, as it appears,  
Accountant to the law upon that pain.

*Isab.* True.

*Ang.* Admit no other way to save his life,—  
As I subscribe not that, nor any other,  
But in the loss of question,—that you, his sister,  
Finding yourself desired of such a person,  
Whose credit with the judge, or own great place,  
Could fetch your brother from the manacles  
Of the all-building law ; and that there were  
No earthly mean to save him, but that either  
You must lay down the treasures of your body  
To this supposed, or else to let him suffer ;  
What would you do ?

*Isab.* As much for my poor brother as myself :  
That is, were I under the terms of death,  
The impression of keen whips I'd bear as rubies,  
And strip myself to death, as to a bed  
That longing have been sick for, ere I'd yield  
My body up to shame.

*Ang.* Then must your brother die.

*Isab.* And 'twere the cheaper way :  
Better it were a brother died at once,  
Than that a sister, by redeeming him,  
Should die for ever.

\* \* \* \*

*Ang.* Plainly conceive, I love you.

*Isab.* My brother did love Juliet,  
And you tell me that he shall die for it.

*Ang.* He shall not, Isabel, if you give me  
love.

*Isab.* I know your virtue hath a licence in't,  
Which seems a little fouler than it is,  
To pluck on others.

*Ang.* Believe me, on mine honour,  
My words express my purpose.

*Isab.* Ha ! little honour to be much believed,  
And most pernicious purpose ! Seeming, seem-  
ing !

I will proclaim thee, Angelo ; look for't :  
Sign me a present pardon for my brother,  
Or with an outstretch'd throat I'll tell the world  
aloud

What man thou art.

*Ang.* Who will believe thee, Isabel ?  
My unsoil'd name, the austereness of my life,  
My vouch against you, and my place i' the state,  
Will so your accusation overweigh,  
That you shall stifle in your own report  
And smell of calumny. I have begun,  
And now I give my sensual race the rein :  
Fit thy consent to my sharp appetite ;  
Lay by all nicety and prolixious blushes,  
That banish what they sue for ; redeem thy  
brother

By yielding up thy body to my will ;  
Or else he must not only die the death,  
But thy unkindness shall his death draw out  
To lingering sufferance. Answer me to-morrow,  
Or, by the affection that now guides me most,  
I'll prove a tyrant to him. As for you,  
Say what you can, my false o'erweighs your true.

[*Exit.*]

## “MEASURE FOR MEASURE.”

IN *Measure for Measure*, as in some other of his plays, Shakespeare has remodelled an earlier and somewhat rough composition to “finer issues,” suffering much to remain as the less skillful hand had left it, and not raising the whole of his work to an equal degree of intensity. Hence perhaps some of that depth and weightiness which make this play so impressive, as with the true seal of experience, like a fragment of life itself, rough and

disjointed indeed, but made to yield out in places its profounder meaning. In *Measure for Measure*, in contrast with the flawless execution of *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare has spent his art in just enough modification of the scheme of the earlier play as to make it exponent of this purpose, adapting its terrible essential incidents, so that Coleridge found it the only painful work among Shakespeare's dramas, and leaving for the reader of to-day more than the usual number of difficult expressions; but infusing a lavish colour and a profound significance into it, so that under his touch certain select portions of it rise far above the level of all but his own best poetry, and working out of it a morality so characteristic that the play might well pass for the central expression of his moral judgments. . . .

It was from Whetstone, a contemporary English writer, that Shakespeare derived the outline of Cinthio's "rare history" of *Promos and Cassandra*, one of that numerous class of Italian stories, like Boccaccio's *Tancred of Salerno*, in which the mere energy of southern passion has everything its own way, and which, though they may repel many a northern reader by a certain cruelty in their colouring, seem to have been full of fascination for the Elizabethan age. . . . Out of these insignificant sources Shakespeare's play rises, full of solemn expression, and with a profoundly designed beauty, the new body of a higher, though sometimes remote and difficult poetry escaping from the imperfect relics of the old story, yet not wholly transformed, and even as it stands, but the preparation only, we might think, of a still more imposing design. For once, we have in it a real example of that sort of writing which is sometimes described as *suggestive*, and which by the help of certain subtly calculated hints only, brings into distinct shape the reader's own half-realized imaginings. . . .

*Measure for Measure*, therefore, by the quality of these higher designs, woven by his strange magic on a texture of poorer quality, is hardly less indicative than *Hamlet* even of Shakespeare's reason, of his power of moral interpretation. It deals not, like *Hamlet*, with the problems which beset one of exceptional temperament, but with mere human nature. It brings before us a group of persons, attractive, full of desire, vessels of the genial seed-bearing powers of nature, a gaudy life flowering out over the old court and city of Vienna, a spectacle of the fulness and pride of life which to some may seem to touch the verge of wantonness. Behind this group of people, behind their various action, Shakespeare inspires in us the sense of a strong tyranny of nature and circumstances. Then what shall there be on this side of it—on our side, the spectators' side, of this painted screen, with its puppets who are really glad or sorry all the time? what philosophy of life, what sort of equity? . . .

The Duke disguised as a friar, with his curious moralising on life and death, and Isabella in her first mood of renunciation, a thing "ensky'd and sainted," come with the quiet of the cloister as a relief to this lust and pride of life: like some grey monastic picture hung on the wall of a gaudy room, their presence cools the heated air of the



piece. For a moment we are within the placid, conventual walls, to which they fancy at first that the Duke has come as a man crossed in love, with Friar Thomas and Friar Peter, calling each other by their homely English names, or at the nunnery among the novices, with their little limited privileges, where

“ If you speak you must not show your face,  
Or if you show your face you must not speak.”

. . . . . At first Isabella comes upon the scene as a tranquillising influence in it. But Shakespeare, in the development of the action, brings quite different and unexpected qualities out of her. It is his characteristic poetry to expose this cold, chastened personality, respected even by the worldly Lucio as “ something ensky'd and sainted, and almost an immortal spirit,” to two sharp, shameful trials, and wring out of her a fiery, revealing eloquence. Thrown into the terrible dilemma of the piece, called upon to sacrifice that cloistral whiteness to sisterly affection, become in a moment the ground of strong contending passions, she develops a new character, and shows herself suddenly a kinswoman of those strangely conceived women, like Webster's Vittoria, who unite to a seductive sweetness, something of a dangerous and tigerlike changefulness of feeling. The swift, vindictive anger leaps, like a white flame, into this white spirit, and, stripped naked in a moment of all convention, she stands before us clear, detached, columnar, among the tender frailties of the piece. . . . .

As Shakespeare in *Measure for Measure* has refashioned, after a nobler pattern materials already at hand, so that the relics of other men's poetry are incorporated into his perfect work, so traces of the old “ morality,” that early form of dramatic composition which had for its function the inculcating of some moral theme, survive in it also, and give it a peculiar ethical interest. This ethical interest, though it can escape no attentive reader, yet, in accordance with that artistic law which demands the predominance of form everywhere over the mere matter or subject handled, is not to be wholly separated from the special circumstances, necessities, embarrassments, of these particular dramatic persons. The old “ moralities ” exemplified most often some rough and ready lesson. Here the very intricacy and subtlety of the moral world itself, the difficulty of seizing the true relations of so complex a material, the difficulty of just judgment, of judgment which shall not be unjust, are the lessons conveyed. . . . . It is no longer *Promos and Cassandra*, but *Measure for Measure*, its new name expressly suggesting the subject of *poetical justice*. The action of the play, like the action of life itself for the keener observer, develops in us the conception and the yearning to realise this poetical justice, the true justice of which Angelo knows nothing, because it lies for the most part beyond the limits of any acknowledged law. The idea of justice involves the idea of rights.

But, at bottom, rights are equivalent to that which really is ; and the recognition of its rights therefore, the justice it requires of our hands, or our thoughts, is the recognition of that which the person, or the thing, in its inmost nature, really is ; and as sympathy alone can discover that which really is in matters of feeling and thought, true justice is in its essence a finer knowledge through love. . . . It is for this finer justice, a justice based on a more delicate appreciation of the true conditions of men and things, a true respect of persons in our estimate of actions, that the people in *Measure for Measure* cry out as they pass before us ; and as the poetry of this play is full of the peculiarities of Shakespeare's poetry, so in its ethics it is an epitome of Shakespeare's moral judgments.

WALTER H. PATER.—*A Fragment on "Measure for Measure."* *Fortnightly Review*, November, 1874, pp. 652—658.

#### ANGELO AND ISABELLA.

THIS is Shakespeare's only instance of comedy where the wit seems to foam and sparkle up from a fountain of bitterness ; where even the humour is made pungent with sarcasm ; and where the poetry is marked with tragic austerity. In none of his plays does he discover less of leaning upon pre-existing models, or a more manly negligence, perhaps sometimes carried to excess, of those lighter graces of manner which none but the greatest minds may safely despise. His genius is here out in all its colossal individuality, and he seems to have meant it should be so ; as if he felt quite sure of having now reached his mastership ; so that henceforth, instead of leaning on those who had gone before, he was to be himself a leaning place for those who should follow.

Accordingly the play abounds in fearless grapplings and strugglings of mind with matters too hard to consist with much facility and gracefulness of tongue. The thought is strong, and in its strength careless of appearances, and seems rather wishing than fearing to have its roughnesses seen ; the style is rugged, irregular, abrupt, sometimes running into an almost forbidding sternness, but everywhere throbbing with life ; often a whole page of meaning is condensed and rammed into a clause or an image, so that the force thereof beats and reverberates through the entire scene : with little of elaborate grace or finish, we have bold, deep strokes, where the want of finer softenings and shadings is more than made up by increased energy and expressiveness ; the words going right to the spot, and leaving none of their work undone. Thus the workmanship is in a very uncommon degree what I designate as *steep*, meaning thereby *hard to get to the top of*. Hence it is perhaps, in part, that so many axioms and "brief sententious precepts"

of moral and practical wisdom from this play have wrought themselves into the currency and familiarity of household words. . . .

Angelo is at first not so properly a hypocrite as a self-deceiver. For it is very conceivable that he wishes to be, and sincerely thinks he is, what he affects and appears to be ; as is plain from his consternation at the wickedness which opportunity awakens into conscious action within him. He thus typifies that sort of men of whom Bishop Butler says, "They try appearances upon themselves as well as upon the world, and with at least as much success ; and choose to manage so as to make their own minds easy with their faults, which can scarce be done without management, rather than to mend them." Even so Angelo for self-ends imitates sanctity, and then gets taken in by his own imitation. This "mystery of iniquity" locks him from all true knowledge of himself. He must be worse before he will be better. The refined hypocrisies which so elude his eye, and thus nurse his self-righteous pride, must put on a grosser form till he cannot choose but see himself as he is. The secret devil within must blaze out in a shape too palpable to be ignored. And so, as often happens where the subtleties of self-deceit are thus cherished, he at length proceeds a downright conscious hypocrite, this too of the deepest dye.

Angelo's original fault lay in forgetting or ignoring his own frailty. As a natural consequence, his "darling sin is pride that apes humility." And his conceit of virtue, — "my gravity, wherein (let no man hear me) I take pride"—while it keeps him from certain vices, is itself a far greater vice than any it keeps him from ; insomuch that his interviews with Isabella may almost be said to *elevate* him into lust. They at least bring him to a just vision of his inward self. The serpent-charms of self-deceit which he has so hugged are now broken. For even so—and how awful is the fact !—men often wound themselves so deeply with medicines, that Providence has no way for them, apparently, but to make wounds medicinal, or, as Hooker says, "to cure by vice where virtue hath stricken." So indeed it must be where men turn their virtues into food of spiritual pride ; which is the hardest of all sores to be cured, "inasmuch as that which rooteth out other vices causeth this." And perhaps the array of low and loathsome vices which the Poet has clustered about Angelo in the persons of Lucio, Pompey and Mrs. Overdone, was necessary, to make us feel how unspeakably worse than any or all of these is Angelo's pride of virtue. It can hardly be needful to add, that in Angelo these fearful traits of character are depicted with a truth and sternness of pencil, such as could scarce have been achieved but in an age fruitful in living examples of them.

The placing of Isabella, "a thing ensky'd and sainted," and who truly *is* all that Angelo seems, side by side with such a breathing shining mass of pitch, is one of those dramatic audacities wherein none perhaps but a Shakespeare could safely indulge. Of her character the most prolific hint that is given is what she says to the disguised Duke,

when he is urging her to fasten her ear on his advisings touching the part of Mariana : " I have spirit to do anything that appears not foul in the truth of my spirit." That is, she cares not what face her action may wear to the world, nor how much reproach it may bring on her from others, if it will only leave her the society, which she has never parted from, of a clean breast and a pure conscience.

Called from the cloister, where she is on the point of taking the veil of earthly renouncement, to plead for her brother's life, she comes forth a saintly anchoress, clad in the austerest sweetness of womanhood, to throw the light of her virgin soul upon the dark, loathsome scenes and characters around her. With great strength of intellect and depth of feeling she unites an equal power of imagination, the whole being pervaded, quickened, and guided by a still, intense, religious enthusiasm. And because her virtue is securely rooted and grounded in religion, therefore she never thinks of it as her own, but only as a gift from the Being whom she adores, and who is her only hope for the keeping of what she has. Which suggests the fundamental point of contrast between her and Angelo, whose virtue, if such it may be called, is nothing, nay, worse than nothing, because it is a virtue of his own making, is without any inspiration from the one Source of all true good, and so has no basis but pride, which is itself a bubble. Accordingly her character appears to me among the finest, in some respects the very finest, in Shakespeare's matchless cabinet of female excellence. . . .

The dialogues between her and Angelo are extremely subtle and suggestive on both sides, fraught with meanings to reward the most searching ethical study. . . . At the opening of their interview she is in a struggle between wishing and not wishing, and therefore not in a mood to " play with reason and discourse." With her settled awe of purity, she cannot but admit the law to be right, yet she sees not how, in the circumstances, mercy can be wrong. At this thought her heart presently kindles, her eloquence springs to work, and its tones grow deeper, clearer, more penetrating as point after point catches her mental eye. Thenceforth it is a keen encounter of mind with mind ; but on his side it is the conscious logic of an adroit and practised lawyer, who has full mastery of his case, and is prompt in all the turns of legal ingenuity ; while on her side it is the logic of nature's finest moral instincts spontaneously using the forces of a quick, powerful, and well-balanced intellect as their organ of expression. . . . With a tact that seems like inspiration, she feels out his assailable points, and keeps surprising and engaging him with new and startling appeals to his innermost feelings. At length, when, his wicked purpose being formed, he goes to talking to her in riddles, she quickly understands him, but thinks he is only testing her ; her replies leave him in doubt whether craft or innocence speaks in her : so she draws him on to speaking plainer and plainer, till at last he makes a full and explicit avowal of his inhuman baseness. He is especially caught, be it observed, " in the strong toil " of her moral grace ; at least he is pleased to

think so : and as he has been wont to pride himself on being a saint, so he now takes refuge in the thought, "O cunning enemy, that to catch a saint, with saints dost bait thy hook." <sup>1</sup>

H. N. HUDSON.—*Shakespeare, his Life, Art, and Characters*,  
Vol. I. pp. 406—416.

<sup>1</sup> A singular piece of criticism on this play will be found in "*Shakspeare*," by F. Rio, whose main object in the volume, as is well known, was that of proving Shakespeare a Catholic. He notices the unpopularity of the play with Protestant critics, who cannot appreciate the "vertus difficiles" of the cloister. Shakespeare, according

to M. Rio, wrote the play as a kind of petition in favour of his persecuted fellow Catholics. "In the eyes of every impartial reader its principal purpose is the glorification of the ascetic ideal in general, and in particular of cloistral virginity" (p. 298).

## OTHELLO.

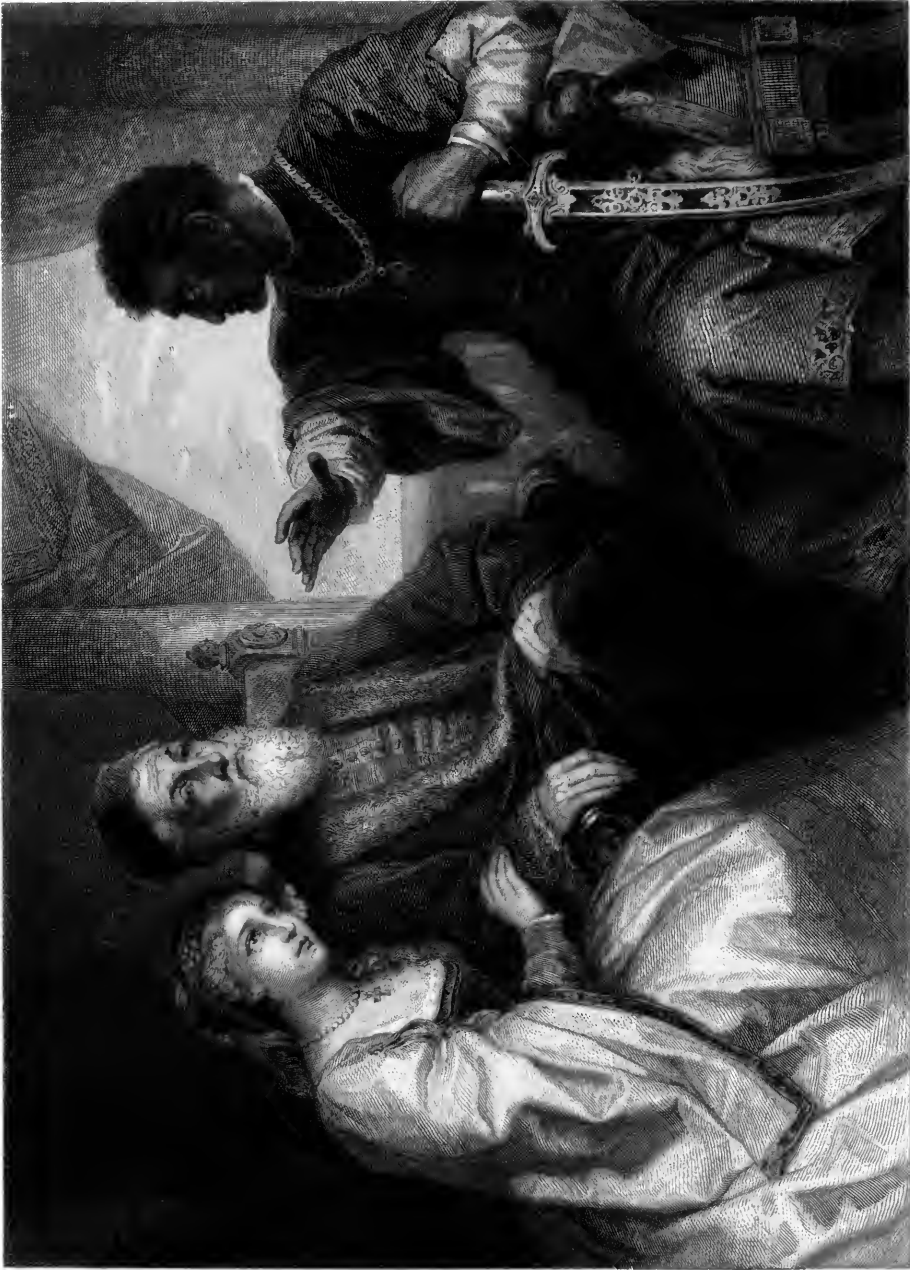
## ACT I. SCENE III.

*Othello.* Her father loved me ; oft invited me ;  
 Still question'd me the story of my life,  
 From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes,  
 That I have pass'd.  
 I ran it through, even from my boyish days,  
 To the very moment that he bade me tell it ;  
 Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,  
 Of moving accidents by flood and field,  
 Of hairbreadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly  
 breach,  
 Of being taken by the insolent foe  
 And sold to slavery, of my redemption thence  
 And portance in my travels' history :  
 Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,  
 Rough quarries, rocks and hills whose heads  
 touch heaven,  
 It was my hint to speak,—such was the process ;  
 And of the Cannibals that each other eat,  
 The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads  
 Do grow beneath their shoulders. This to hear  
 Would Desdemona seriously incline :

But still the house-affairs would draw her thence :  
 Which ever as she could with haste despatch,  
 She'd come again, and with a greedy ear  
 Devour up my discourse : which I observing,  
 Took once a pliant hour, and found good means  
 To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart  
 That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,  
 Whereof by parcels she had something heard,  
 But not intently : I did consent,  
 And often did beguile her of her tears,  
 When I did speak of some distressful stroke  
 That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,  
 She gave me for my pains a world of sighs :  
 She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing  
 strange,  
 'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful :  
 She wish'd she had not heard it, yet she wish'd  
 That heaven had made her such a man : she  
 thank'd me,  
 And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,  
 I should but teach him how to tell my story,  
 And that would woo her. Upon this hint I  
 spake :  
 She lov'd me for the dangers I had pass'd,  
 And I loved her that she did pity them.  
 This only is the witchcraft I have used.

## OTHELLO AND DESDEMONA.

I N Othello there are two men ; there is, first, the savage, who has long been such, who has long lived a wild life, abandoning himself without the shadow of an inward struggle to every outburst of passion that rises in his soul, yet possessed of that substratum of goodness and natural generosity which our poetic fictions are pleased to ascribe to the desert-king, the lion ; secondly, the civilized man—grown civilized by the influence of war, but of war alone, by the nobility of his courage, and that self-possession which the habitual presence of danger develops. In the quiet of a life of peace, the civilized man naturally predominates ; Othello is calm, confides in the superiority of his own character, in the lofty station of his own soul, and in the importance of his services rendered to the state ; but he obeys the first signal, he marches at the first word, disciplined as a soldier, rendered tame as an animal might be. He has conquered Desdemona's young heart by a marvellous and happy chance, the probability, nay, the very possibility of which is a flight of poetry, a happy chance inconceivable by ordinary minds. "What delight," asks Iago, "shall she have to look on the devil?" But this grace of favouring



G. Babbington del.

H. Robinson sculp.

Charles - Miller





fortune seems to him merely natural and simple, a thing not to excite thought or anxiety ; it has cost him not a step on his part, not a moment of uneasiness, not a thought about his age, his face, the rudeness of his manners ; he possesses Desdemona as his property, as he holds his good sword, not imagining that this possession of her can be disputed otherwise than by open force ; and therefore he is at ease ; for the rest, if he yields himself to love, love is at most an accident in his life ; his life itself is war, this is the air he breathes, the earth on which he treads : and yet love may indeed determine his destiny. . . .

Desdemona,—set over against the Moor,—is the most perfect ideal, the purest type of womanhood ; a being inferior, and yet divine ; subordinated by her vocation ; free before her choice is made, but the slave of her own choice. Modesty, tenderness, submission,—these constitute Desdemona. Her modesty is spotless, her tenderness immeasurable, her submission limitless and undivided. What distinguishes her from all other women is that she does not possess these qualities ; these qualities possess and absorb *her*. There is in her soul no place for other things,—things indifferent, bad, or even good,—for other likings, other feelings, other duties. She has given away herself, it matters not to whom, and it matters not for what reason : it is enough that she has given herself away wholly, body and soul, thoughts and desires, hopes and memories. There is no longer aught remaining of her which she can reserve for any person. She deserts her father, deceives him, braves him, as far as Desdemona can brave anyone, with full heart, and the blush upon her forehead, but without hesitation and without repenting of her choice. Merely to look upon the object of that choice is to see how pure are all her thoughts. There is not the slightest illusion, either as to the kind of life she may expect, nor, it may be, even as to the price which some day so deep affection may be forced to pay ; she is resigned beforehand, resigned to everything that may befall, assured that such is her worldly lot ; assured, whatever may happen, that she will never cast backwards one glance of regret, never hesitate between this side and that.

And to produce this complete impression upon us what does Shakespeare require ?

Four pencil strokes ; no more.

THE DUKE DE BROGLIE.—*Sur Othello*, printed in Guizot's *Shakspeare et son Temps* (1852), pp. 317—319.

## OTHELLO.

OTHELLO is by race, complexion, habits and natural disposition, a stranger in the state which we see him serving, although he has become a Christian and a Venetian. The stain of his birth is ever kept in fresh remembrance by his dark skin, and neither his deeds nor his royal origin can free him from the prejudices of men. The peculiar

disposition of his Mauritanian race, the violent temperament, the power of passion, the force of a tropical fancy, could not be effaced, however much the self-command of the much-tried man, steeled by deeds and sufferings, had attempted it. That which most surely destroys in us the original and luxuriant strength of passions, he had missed in early life; the quiet, early, uninterrupted, all-powerful influence of education and conventional habits, which softens the wild natural power of our impulses by this means, that from the very outset it modifies and relaxes it. What, in this respect, birth and origin had begun in Othello, his fate, education, calling, and life had continued. From his seventh year he grew up in the "tented field," and remained estranged and alienated from the peaceful world, the citizen-life, the state of market or home, the arts, cultivation, enjoyment, and repose. He was a "full soldier," to whom the flinty and steel couch of war was as a thrice-driven bed of down. In his speeches all his images and comparisons are taken from the wars, the sea, or the chase. When landing in Cyprus, he has just escaped the tumult of the elements, his heart is opened and his tongue loosened, and, contrary to his habit, he is then talkative, kindly, and tender; in deeds and dangers he finds the source of cheerful vigour. There is, his spirit, his range of sight, his power of mind, his cool determination; the noblest gifts and acquirements of his nature are at their highest point, when dangers surround him: it is a picture full of greatness, which Iago draws of his immovable calmness, which never left him even when the cannon scattered his battle-array, and tore his own brother from his side. To this inclination for deeds and adventures, this delight in bold and threatening enterprises, he has yielded under the impulse of an heroic nature, journeying by land and sea to the ends of the earth, to behold its terrors and its wonders. He had been in "antres vast and deserts idle;" he had had "hairbreadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach;" he had been taken prisoner, and sold to slavery and again redeemed; he had seen

"Cannibals that each other eat,  
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads  
Do grow beneath their shoulders."

So he told Desdemona, when he was least inclined for fable; he informed the Senate of Venice of this narration, when the most accurate truth was his duty and his interest; the strongest sincerity lay besides in his nature and principles. He, therefore, must have believed he had actually seen those marvels of distant regions; his southern fancy had mingled with his power of observation; or he related only from hearsay;<sup>1</sup> credulity

<sup>1</sup> Thus, as Sir Walter Raleigh in the description of his journey to Guiana in 1595, tells of the cannibals, amazons, and the headless people of Ewipanoma, on which Shakespeare, according to

commentators, must have thought in this passage of the wonders of Othello's journey; although he may just as well have had Mandeville before him.

and superstition betray at any rate his origin and the power of his imagination ; and these are traits which it behoves us to hold in lively remembrance, in order subsequently to comprehend the incredible and fatal exercise of these very qualities. Deeply is the belief in mysterious powers rooted in that redundant imagination which is so natural in the hunter, the sailor, and the adventurer. The magic with which he invests the handkerchief, his wedding-gift to Desdemona, is not merely feigned, to increase its value and significance in her estimation ; she receives it so trustfully, that she questions not his belief in such wonderful powers ; and other places there are where he speaks credulously of the omen of a "raven o'er the infected house," and the influence of the moon upon the spirits of men. With this previous history, Othello had entered the service of the Venetian State. He had become so naturalized there, that like a patriot he held the honour of the State as his own honour ; this he showed at Aleppo, when in the midst of the enemy's land, he stabbed the Turk who insulted Venice by striking a Venetian. By his warlike deeds he had made himself indispensable to the State ; he was "all in all" to the Senate ; the people and public opinion, "the sovereign mistress of effects," were on his side. Only among the noble and the higher classes has he open enemies and enviers : those who have the privileges, have ever the prejudices too. We hear, indeed, in what tone Iago and Roderigo speak of the "black devil" and "the thick lips ;" we hear how poisonously Iago, under the mask of good intention, tells him to his face what prejudices as to his colour and birth are circulated in Venice ; we see plainly at what a distance he was regarded by Brabantio, at whose house he was even a favoured guest. In the eyes of these people he was not the deserving warrior of their country, but a vagrant, vagabond, foreign barbarian ; the finger of scorn pointed at him, and he felt it. That he should meet his enemies with disregard and contempt, lay in his proud nature ; we hear that he rejected important requests for Iago ; we see him opposing the pride of the senator's cap (Brabantio) by the assertion of his own royal birth ; if he treats as he does the powerful and influential father-in-law in the moment of closest union, how might he have acted in the case of provocation ! There rested upon him, as upon the descendants of the Jewish people, the stain of unequal birth and the fate of expulsion ; the more his services emancipated him, the more sensitive, one may believe, would he be to the prejudices which yet remained. But before he attained to this position, throughout his whole life, resentment and bitterness must have been planted in his spirit through this pariah condition. The feeling of disregard oppressed him ; disunion with the world ; discord with men raged concealed within ; this gave him the grave expression, the silent reserved nature, that brooded deeply over thoughts and conceptions ; it gave him the inclination, so common with rugged characters, to yield himself up to soft compliant dispositions, to the apparent honesty of the hypocritical Iago, to the pliable Cassio, and entirely to the gentle Desdemona. There was a time when this feeling of rejection called forth in him

a disturbance within, which, with one of his strongly expressive comparisons, he called "chaos," and which he shudders to look back upon. He had cooled his hot Moorish blood, but he could not change it. He had learned to repress his raging temperament in the school of circumstances, but these struggles, one thinks, had become hard to him and had often been fruitless. If from some just and heavy cause the flood-gates of restrained passion gave way, then his condition became "perplexed in the extreme," stubborn obstinacy seized him, and the outburst of frightful emotions betrayed the inherent power of his nature, threatened his mind with distraction, and overcame even his body with spasms and faintness.

But the degree in which Othello exercised self-command, the measure of self-possession and power over his passions which he acquired, this it is which attracts us to him still more than his deeds and warlike talent. The profession of arms had invested him with calmness, firmness, severe discipline, and strength of will and purpose; these qualities related to his innermost nature and influenced his intercourse with men. He could no longer refine his habits after a long camp-life according to the gentle fashion of courtly society, but he disciplined them like a soldier. He had cooled down his anger and zeal on principle. As we become acquainted with him, he leaves upon everyone around him the impression of a mastery over self, firmly to be relied upon; he appears to all a man of large heart, one not easily irritated; whom no passion decides, and whose firm virtue no chance or fate can shake. On the ground of this inward repose, the beautiful qualities of his mind appear more clearly. A warrior, knowing "little of this great world," he had no great versatility of mind; he was "little blessed with the set phrase of speech;" ignorant of the arts of cunning and craftiness, he was pliable, credulous, and easily deceived by the hypocrisy which he perceived not. With these his mental deficiencies, the excellent natural qualities of his heart stand in the closest union. His confidence was without limits, when once established; to dissemble was difficult to him, ay, impossible; all ostentation and conceit were foreign to him; the candour, the lack of suspicion, the constancy of this true soul, his perfect kindness, his thoroughly noble nature, were acknowledged even by his enemies. With that strong self-discipline, with that calm demeanour, with this noble-mindedness was united the most manly sense of honour. He had *won* for himself the honour which others inherit; and he defended it with the jealousy and care with which the possessor watches over a property whose acquisition had been difficult. With toil had Othello thus risen to that even balance of conduct which rests in the genuine honest self-reliance to which his merits had advanced him. But even at this highest point of his self-contentment, we never quite lose the impression, that this self-reliance does not stand unalterably firm, that this evenness of conduct fluctuates, in one scale of which the acknowledgment he meets with alternates with the other scale of his secret discontent springing from the feeling of his birth. The

slightest jar on the one side or the other, one fears, would disturb the equilibrium, if not wholly destroy it. But just at the point of time, in which we are introduced to the play, an unexpected happiness befalls the Moor, which seems as if it must for ever ensure this equilibrium: the most perfect woman in Venice falls to his lot. In the delineation of this woman, the poet has sketched a character of extraordinary truth and naturalness, the comprehension of which must next occupy our attention. Shakespeare has invested Desdemona with all that can render her precious and invaluable to the Moor. He has endowed her with a beauty "that paragons description and wild fame" Othello became acquainted with her as a busy housewife, "delicate with her needle, an admirable musician," whose voice could "sing the savageness out of a bear," and even had charms for the Moor, though he cared not for music. . . . Conspicuous mental endowments would perhaps have repelled rather than attracted the Moor; his own plain nature would not have felt easy by the side of a woman of this nature. This genuine manliness is only attracted by the most genuine womanliness, and this, again, Othello would have found belonging rather to the feeling than to the witty nature of woman. He would exchange the splendour of all mental endowments for the one characteristic, which belongs to Desdemona, the highest charm of the womanly nature, which Iago names not, because he knows it not, or believes not in it: her humility, her harmless ingenuousness, her modesty, and innocence. Not the breath of an impure thought has ever darkened the mirror of this soul; the mere word of sin it abhors her to speak; her name is clear and "fresh as Dian's visage." The genuineness of her soul and mind culminates (and this is the highest point of her nature) in a perfect unsuspectingness, which has taken too deep a root in her for this suspicious world. This unsuspectingness is the source of all her noble qualities, but it is also the cause of her calumination and aspersion; in it she raises faults to noble virtues, but she sustains also her virtue in less circumspect demeanour; the very excess of the most innocent consciousness makes her idle and careless of appearance; she never needed the law, and knew of no sin; she might err against many rules of conventional custom, but her heart would be pure from stain, because any infraction of the eternal moral law would be impossible to her; she has no suspicion of other men, and dreams not that they could think evil of her; thus by this ingenuousness she obtains her happiness, and through it causes her unhappiness.

G. G. GERVINUS.—*Shakespeare Commentaries*, translated by F. E. Bunnett (1863), Vol. II. pp. 52—61.

## OTHELLO.

## ACT V.

SCENE II. *A Bedchamber in the Castle: DEMONIA in bed asleep; a light burning.*

*Enter* OTHELLO.

*Oth.* It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul,—  
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!—  
It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood;  
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,  
And smooth as monumental alabaster.  
Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.  
Put out the light, and then put out the light:  
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,  
I can again thy former light restore,

Should I repent me: but once put out thy light,  
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,  
I know not where is that Promethean heat  
That can thy light relume. When I have pluck'd  
the rose,

I cannot give it vital growth again,  
It must needs wither: I'll smell it on the tree.

[*Kissing her.*]

Ah, balmy breath, that dost almost persuade  
Justice to break her sword! One more, one  
more.

Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,  
And love thee after. One more, and this the  
last:

So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,  
But they are cruel tears: this sorrow's heavenly;  
It strikes where it doth love. She wakes!

## THE TRAGEDY OF "OTHELLO."

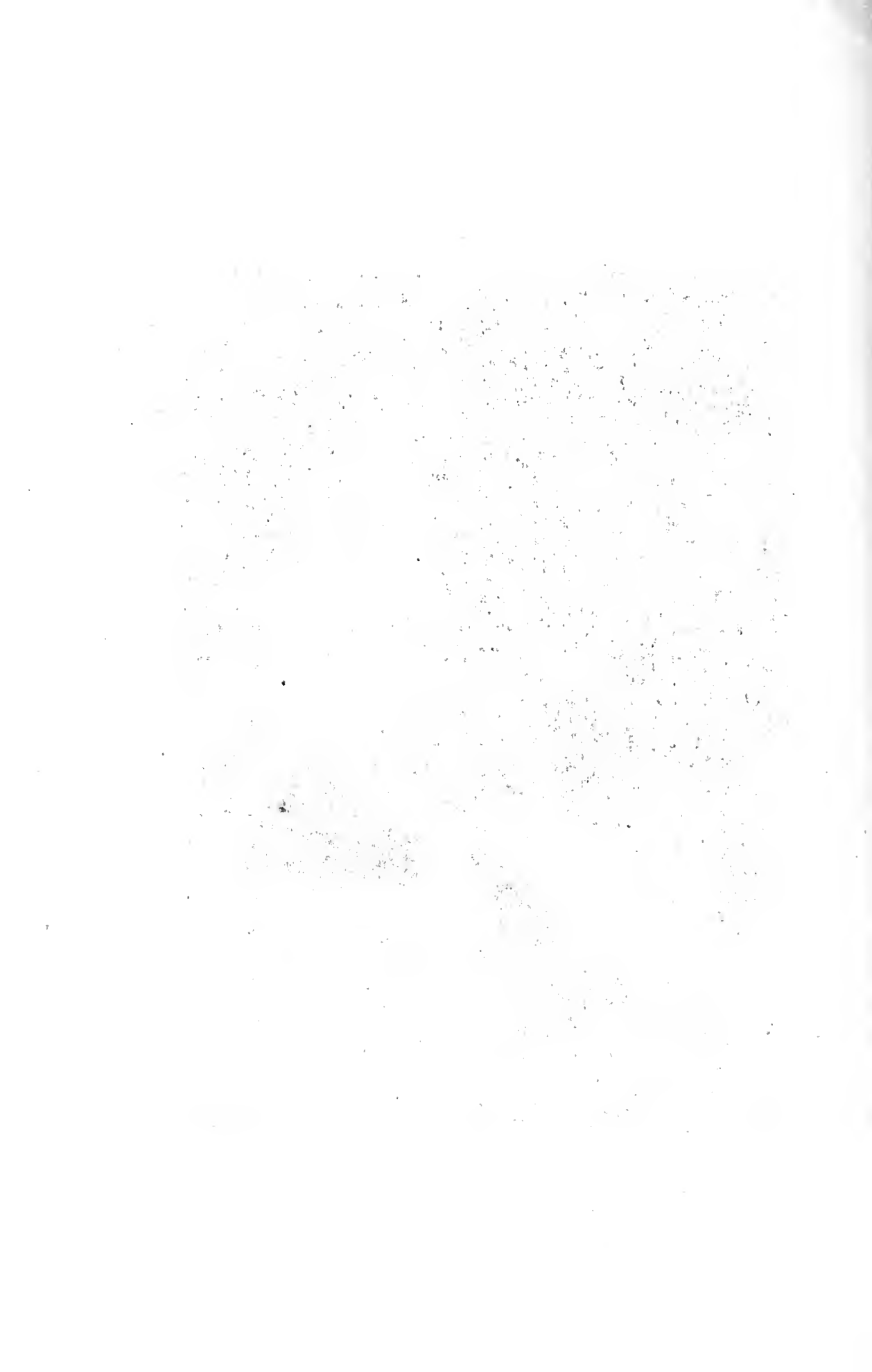
IF *Macbeth* is the most perfect [of Shakespeare's dramas] in the tragic action of the story, the most perfect in tragic passion is *Othello*. There is nothing to determine unhappiness to the lives of the two principal persons. Their love begins auspiciously; and the renown, high favour, and high character of Othello seem to promise a stability of happiness to himself and the wife of his affections. But the blood which has been scorched in the veins of his race, under the suns of Africa, bears a poison that swells up to confound the peace of the Christian marriage-bed. He is jealous; and the dreadful overmastering passion which disturbs the steadfastness of his own mind, overflows upon his life and hers, and consumes them from the earth. The external action of the play is nothing—the causes of events are none; the whole interest of the story, the whole course of the action, the causes of all that happens, live all in the breast of Othello. The whole destiny of those who are to perish lies in his passion. Hence the high tragic character of the play—showing one false illusory passion ruling and confounding all life. All that is below tragedy in the passion of love is taken away at once by the awful character of Othello, for such he seems to us to be designed to be. He appears never as a lover—but at once as a husband; and the relation of his love made dignified, as it is a husband's justification of his marriage, is also dignified, as it is a soldier's relation of his stern and perilous life. It is a courted, not a wooing, at least unconsciously-wooing love; and though full of tenderness, yet it is but slightly expressed, as being solely the gentle affection of a strong mind, and in no wise a passion. "And I loved her, that she did pity them." Indeed



279 Hoffmann del.

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Charles - Michel





he is not represented as a man of passion, but of stern, sedate, immovable mood." "I have seen the cannon, that, like the devil, from his very arm puffed his own brother"—and *can* he be angry? Montalto speaks with the same astonishment, calling him respected for wisdom and gravity. Therefore, it is no love-story. His love itself, as long as it is happy, is perfectly calm and serene, the protecting tenderness of a husband. It is not till it is disordered that it appears as a passion. Then is shown a power in contention with itself—a mighty being struck with death, and bringing up from all the depths of life convulsions and agonies. It is no exhibition of the power of the passion of love, but of the passion of life vitally wounded, and self-overmastering. What was his love? He had placed all his faith in good—all his imagination of purity, all his tenderness of nature upon one heart; and at once that heart seems to him an ulcer. It is that recoiling agony that shakes his whole body,—that having confided with the whole power of his soul, he is utterly betrayed,—that having departed from the pride and might of his life, which he held in his conquest and sovereignty over men, to rest himself upon a new and gracious affection, to build himself and his life upon one beloved heart,—having found a blessed affection, which he had passed through life without knowing,—and having chosen, in the just and pure goodness of his will, to take that affection instead of all other hopes, desires, and passions to live by,—that at once he sees it sent out of existence, and a damned thing standing in its place. It is then that he feels a forfeiture of all power, and a blasting of all good. If Desdemona had been really guilty, the greatness would have been destroyed, because his love would have been unworthy,—false. But she is good, and his love is most perfect, just, and good. That a man should place his perfect love on a wretched thing is miserably debasing and shocking to thought; but that, loving perfectly and well, he should, by hellish human circumvention, be brought to distrust, and dread and abjure his own perfect love, is most mournful indeed,—it is the infirmity of our good nature, wrestling in vain with the strong powers of evil. Moreover, he would, had Desdemona been false, have been the mere victim of fate; whereas he is now in a manner his own victim. His happy love was heroic tenderness; his injured love is terrible passion; and disordered power, engendered within itself to its own destruction, is the height of all tragedy. The character of Othello is perhaps the most greatly drawn, the most heroic of any of Shakespeare's actors; but it is, perhaps, that one also of which his reader last acquires the intelligence. The intellectual and warlike energy of his mind—his tenderness of affection—his loftiness of spirit—his frank, generous magnanimity—impetuosity like a thunderbolt—and that dark fierce flood of boiling passion, polluting even his imagination—compose a character entirely original; most difficult to delineate, but perfectly delineated.

*Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Vol. V. Quoted in Nathan Drake's  
*Memorials of Shakespeare* (1828), pp. 96—100.

## IAGO.

WHY does Iago amass so great a heap of crimes? Shall we believe, as he himself declares, that he is impelled solely by resentment, by the mortification of not having gained the post of lieutenant, and by the suspicion that his wife, Emilia, at some former time loved Othello? These are trivial causes to produce so terrible effects. If Iago had been named lieutenant instead of Cassio, he would not have been the less a criminal; for he loves evil for evil's sake. He has pity for no one; he slays his wife as he has slain his friend Roderigo. He is the most pernicious and dangerous of men. There is even in his part a wantonness of atrocity and a refinement of malice which can be explained only by a passion for crime itself; he is not satisfied with ordinary offences; he aspires to renown through such achievements. He is like the genius of evil; in the long soliloquies which Shakespeare puts into his mouth, he sometimes stimulates himself with the example of the devices of Satan. Othello, when he sees him once more after he has obtained assurance of Iago's treason, believes that he stands in the presence of the Evil One, and looks down to ascertain whether his ancient has not the cloven foot. And in truth Shakespeare bestows upon the traitor power no less than supernatural, which impairs the verisimilitude of the action, and, as so doing, may be looked upon as a fault. If Iago be no more than human, he makes too many dupes at one and the same time; it may be asked how he could at once deceive so many different persons,—Roderigo, Cassio, Othello, Desdemona, and, in particular, his wife Emilia,—clearsighted and penetrating as she is. Not one of his projects proves abortive. Although on some occasions he uses rude stratagems, and this in the midst of so many persons interested in learning the truth, who risk upon his advice their future and their lives, yet there is no one of them able to unmask him. His criminal suggestions are too readily followed; the complicity of those about him implies a certain over-credulity. He bids Roderigo disguise himself and set out for Cyprus; Roderigo disguises himself, and sets out. He puts into his hand a sword to strike at Cassio; Roderigo strikes like a blind instrument. He counsels Cassio to implore for Desdemona's pitying intervention; Cassio obeys. He incites Othello to smother his wife in her bed; Othello does the deed.

Iago holds in his hands all the springs of the action. To his manœuvres Shakespeare ascribes all the events, which the Italian novelists, in their narrative, represent as the result of chance. This is caused by the poet's perpetual desire to explain facts by the development of characters, and to leave as little room as may be for the blind sport of fortune. Besides, the evil nature of Iago, although exceptional, is not impossible, nor without parallels. Shakespeare had found it in history before introducing it in fiction. The ancient commits no crime of which Richard III. was not capable—Richard, the murderer

of his own brother and his nephews. . . . But it must be added that Shakespeare is careful to represent Iago as born in Italy, at Florence, in the country of Machiavel. A man who has read *The Prince*, and who puts its maxims into practice, necessarily professes complete indifference as to the choice of his means. He is not conceited on the score of his virtue, but of his skill. He knows no scruples of conscience ; he has no other rule save self-interest. The Italians of the fifteenth century would assuredly have given a vote in favour of the ancient and against Othello. The latter, who inspires us with sympathy, and almost with esteem, in spite of his violences, would have appeared to them contemptible on account of the credulousness with which he falls into all the snares spread for his feet. Cæsar Borgia's contemporaries would have preferred to the barbarian, whose passions are so violent and absorbing, who is incapable of distinguishing an enemy from a friend, and who kills his beloved wife to gratify the vengeance of a hated inferior, the astute politician, who dissembles all his plans, who,—one against many,—gains the confidence of every person whom he wishes to destroy, and, with no other resources than his keen mother wit, triumphs over a woman's beauty and a soldier's valour. In that corrupt period, subtlety was valued more than heroism. The prize of victory would have been awarded to Iago as the subtler of the two.

A. MEZIÈRES.—*Shakespeare, ses Œuvres et ses Critiques*, pp. 278—281.

### MORAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TRAGEDY OF "OTHELLO."

SINCE Coleridge made the remark, all critics of Othello are constrained to repeat after him that the passion of the Moor is not altogether jealousy—it is rather the agony of being compelled to hate that which he supremely loved :—

“ Excellent wretch ! Perdition catch my soul,  
But I do love thee, and when I love thee not,  
Chaos is come again.”

Othello does not feel himself placed in rivalry with Cassio for the affection of his wife. Iago has contrived that the Moor shall overhear him conversing with Cassio about Bianca. Cassio, at the thought of the extravagant pursuit of him by the Venetian courtesan, laughs aloud. It is then that Othello breaks out with the enraged cry, “ How shall I murder him, Iago ? ” But Othello supposed that Cassio had been speaking of Desdemona, and that his laugh was a profane mockery of her fall. It was Cassio's supposed ignoble thought respecting Desdemona, even more than jealousy, which made him seem to Othello to merit mortal vengeance. Ordinarily Othello thinks little about Cassio. His agony is concentrated in the thought that the fairest thing on earth should

be foul, that the fountain from which the current of his life had seemed to run so pure and free should be

“ A cistern for foul toads  
To knot and gender in ! ”

It is with an agonized sense of justice that he destroys the creature who is dearest to him in the world, knowing certainly that with hers his own true life must cease. Nay, it is not with the cessation of Desdemona's breath that the life of Othello ends ; he is unable to survive the loss of faith in her perfect purity. All that had been glorious becomes remote and impossible for him if Desdemona be false. We hear the great childlike sob of Othello's soul :—

“ O, now, for ever  
Farewell the tranquil mind ! farewell content !  
Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars  
That make ambition virtue. ”

From the first suggestion of suspicion by his ensnarer, Othello is impatient for assurance, and finds suspense intolerable. Why ? Not surely because he is eager to convict his wife of infidelity ; but rather because he will not allow his passionate desire to believe her pure to abuse him, and retain him in a fool's paradise, while a great agony may possibly remain before him.

Of the tragic story what is the final issue ? The central point of its spiritual import lies in the contrast between the two men, Iago and his victim. Iago, with keen intellectual faculties and manifold culture in Italian vice, lives and thrives after his fashion in a world from which all virtue and all beauty are absent. Othello with his barbaric innocence and regal magnificence of soul must cease to live the moment he ceases to retain faith in the purity and goodness which were to him the highest and most real things upon earth. Or if he live, life must become to him a cruel agony. Shakespeare compels us to acknowledge that self-slaughter is a rapturous energy—that such prolonged agony is joy in comparison with the earthy life-in-death of such a soul as that of Iago. The noble nature is taken in the toils because it is noble. Iago suspects his wife of every baseness, but the suspicion has no other effect than to intensify his malignity. Iago could not be captured and constrained to heroic suffering and rage. The shame of every being who bears the name of woman is credible to Iago, and yet he can grate from his throat the jarring music :—

“ And let me the canakin clink, clink ;  
And let me the canakin clink. ”

There is therefore, Shakespeare would have us understand, something more inimical to humanity than suffering—namely, an incapacity for noble pain. To die as Othello dies

is indeed grievous. But to live as Iago lives, devouring the dust and stinging—this is more appalling.

Such is the spiritual motive that controls the tragedy. And the validity of this truth is demonstrable to every sound conscience. No supernatural authority needs to be summoned to bear witness to this reality of human life. No pallid flame of hell, no splendour of dawning heaven, needs show itself beyond the verge of earth to illumine this truth. It is a portion of the ascertained fact of human nature, and of this our mortal existence. We look upon "the tragic loading of the bed," and we see Iago in presence of the ruin he has wrought. We are not compelled to seek for any resolution of these apparent discords in any alleged life to come. That may also be; we shall accept it, if it be. But looking sternly and strictly at what is now actual and present to our sight, we yet rise above despair. Desdemona's adhesion to her husband and to love survived the ultimate trial. Othello dies "upon a kiss." He perceives his own calamitous error, and he recognises Desdemona pure and loyal as she was. Goodness is justified of her child. It is evil which suffers defeat. It is Iago whose whole existence has been most blind, purposeless, and miserable—a struggle against the virtuous powers of the world, by which at last he stands convicted and condemned.

EDWARD DOWDEN.—*Shakspeare, his Mind and Art*, pp. 241—244.

### HOMER'S AND SHAKESPEARE'S READING OF HUMAN LIFE AND FATE.

BUT greater men than these have been—men innocent-hearted—too great for contest. Men like Homer and Shakespeare, of so unrecognised personality, that it disappears in future ages, and becomes ghostly, like the tradition of a lost heathen god. Men, therefore, to whose unoffended, uncondemning sight, the whole of human nature reveals itself in a pathetic weakness, with which they will not strive, or in mournful and transitory strength, which they dare not praise. And all Pagan and Christian civilisation thus becomes subject to them. It does not matter how little, or how much, any of us have read, either of Homer or Shakespeare: everything around us, in substance or in thought, has been moulded by them. All Greek gentlemen were educated under Homer. All Roman gentlemen by Greek literature. All Italian, and French, and English gentlemen by Roman literature, and by its principles. Of the scope of Shakespeare, I will say only, that the intellectual measure of every man since born, in the domains of creative thought, may be assigned to him, according to the degree in which he has been taught by Shakespeare. Well, what do these two men, centres of mortal intelligence, deliver to us of conviction, respecting what it most behoves that intelligence to grasp? What is their hope; their crown of rejoicing? What manner of exhortation have they for us or of

rebuke? What lies next their own hearts, and dictates their undying words? Have they any peace to promise to our unrest—any redemption to our misery? Take Homer first, and think if there is any sadder image of human fate than the great Homeric story. The main features in the character of Achilles are its intense desire of justice, and its tenderness of affection. And in that bitter song of the Iliad, this man, though aided continually by the wisest of the gods, and burning with the desire of justice in his heart, becomes yet, through ill-governed passion, the most unjust of men; and full of the deepest tenderness in his heart, becomes yet, through ill-governed passion, the most cruel of men; intense alike in love and in friendship, he loses, first, his mistress, and then his friend; for the sake of the one he surrenders to death the armies of his own land; for the sake of the other, he surrenders all. Will a man lay down his life for his friend? Yea, even for his dead friend, this Achilles, though goddess-born, and goddess-taught, gives up his kingdom, his country and his life—casts alike the innocent and guilty with himself into one gulf of slaughter, and dies at last by the hand of the basest of his adversaries. Is not this a mystery of life?

But what, then, is the message to us of our own poet, and searcher of hearts, after fifteen hundred years of Christian faith have been numbered over the graves of men? Are his words more cheerful than the heathen's—is his hope more near—his trust more sure—his reading of fate more happy? Ah, no! He differs from the Heathen poet chiefly in this—that he recognises for deliverance no gods nigh at hand; and that, by petty chance—by momentary folly—by broken message—by fool's tyranny—or traitor's snare, the strongest and most righteous are brought to their ruin, and perish without word of hope. With necessary truth of insight, he indeed ascribes the power and modesty of habitual devotion, to the gentle and the just. The death-bed of Katherine is bright with vision of angels; and the great soldier-king, standing by his few dead, acknowledges the presence of the hand that can save alike by many or by few. But from those who, with deepest spirit, meditate, and with deepest passion, mourn, there are no such words as these; nor in their hearts such consolations. Instead of the perpetual sense of the helpful presence of the Deity, which through all heathen tradition is the source of heroic strength, in battle, in exile, and in the valley of the shadow of death, we find only in the great Christian poet the consciousness of a mortal law, through which “the gods are just, and of our pleasant vices make instruments to scourge us;” and of the resolved arbitration of the destinies, that conclude into precision of doom what we feebly and blindly began; and force us, when our indiscretion serves us, and our deepest plots do pall, to the confession, that “there's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will.”

Is not this a mystery of life?

JOHN RUSKIN.—*The Mystery of Life and its Arts, a Lecture. Afternoon Lectures,* (1869), pp. 109—111.





Edw. Dixon sc.

H. Adams del.

Harold?

Harold?



## MACBETH.

## ACT III.

SCENE III. *Hall in the Palace. A Banquet prepared.*

*Lady Macbeth.* My royal lord,  
You do not give the cheer : the feast is sold  
That is not often vouch'd, while 'tis a-making,  
'Tis given with welcome : to feed were best at  
home ;

From thence the sauce to meat is ceremony ;  
Meeting were bare without it.

*Macbeth.* Sweet remembrancer !  
Now, good digestion wait on appetite,  
And health on both !

*Lennox.* May't please your highness sit  
[*The Ghost of Banquo enters, and sits in  
Macbeth's place.*

*Macb.* Here had we now our country's honour  
roof'd,

Were the graced person of our Banquo present ;  
Who may I rather challenge for unkindness  
Than pity for mischance !

*Ross.* His absence, sir,  
Lays blame upon his promise. Please't your  
highness

To grace us with your royal company.

*Macb.* The table's full.

*Len.* Here is a place reserved, sir.

*Macb.* Where ?

*Len.* Here, my good lord. What is't that  
moves your highness ?

*Macb.* Which of you have done this ?

*Lords.* What, my good lord ?

*Macb.* Thou canst not say I did it : never  
shake

Thy gory locks at me.

*Ross.* Gentlemen, rise : his highness is not  
well.

*Lady M.* Sit, worthy friends : my lord is  
often thus,

And hath been from his youth : pray you, keep  
seat ;

The fit is momentary ; upon a thought  
He will again be well : if much you note him,  
You shall offend him and extend his passion :  
Feed, and regard him not. Are you a man ?

*Macb.* Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on  
that

Which might appal the devil.

*Lady M.* O proper stuff !

This is the very painting of your fear :

This is the air-drawn dagger which, you said,

Led you to Duncan. O, these flaws and starts,

Impostors to true fear would well become

A woman's story at a winter's fire,

Authorized by her grandam. Shame itself !

Why do you make such faces ? When all's done,  
You look but on a stool.

*Macb.* Prithee, see there ! behold ! look ! lo !  
how say you ?

Why, what care I ? If thou canst nod, speak  
too.

If charnel-houses and our graves must send

Those that we bury back, our monuments

Shall be the maws of kites. [*Ghost vanishes.*

## THE TRAGEDY OF "MACBETH."

**M**ACBETH and *Lear*, *Othello* and *Hamlet*, are usually reckoned Shakespeare's four principal tragedies. *Lear* stands first for the profound intensity of the passion ; *Macbeth* for the wildness of the imagination and the rapidity of the action ; *Othello* for the progressive interest and profound alternations of feeling ; *Hamlet* for the refined development of thought and sentiment. . . . *Macbeth* is like a record of a preternatural and tragical event. It has the rugged severity of an old chronicle with all that the

imagination of the poet can engraft on traditional belief. The castle of Macbeth, round which "the air smells woingly," and where "the temple-haunting martlet builds," has a real subsistence in the mind; the Weird Sisters meet us in person upon "the blasted heath;" the "air-drawn dagger" moves slowly before our eyes; the "gracious Duncan," the "blood-boltered Banquo" stands before us. . . . Shakespeare excelled in the openings of his plays; that of *Macbeth* is the most striking of any. The wildness of the scenery, the sudden shiftings of the situations and characters, the bustle, the expectations excited are equally extraordinary. From the first entrance of the Witches and the description of them when they meet Macbeth,—

"What are these  
So wither'd and so wild in their attire,  
That look not like the inhabitants of th' earth,  
And yet are on 't?"

the mind is prepared for all that follows.

This tragedy is alike distinguished for the lofty imagination it displays, and for the tumultuous vehemence of the action; and the one is made the moving principle of the other. The overwhelming pressure of preternatural agency urges on the tide of human passion with redoubled force. Macbeth himself appears driven along by the violence of his fate like a vessel drifting before a storm; he reels to and fro like a drunken man; he staggers under the weight of his own purposes, and the suggestions of others; he stands at bay with his situation; and from the superstitious awe and breathless suspense into which the communications of the Weird Sisters throw him, is hurried on with daring impatience to verify their predictions, and with impious and bloody hand to tear aside the veil which hides the uncertainty of the future. He is not equal to the struggle with fate and conscience. He now "bends up each corporal instrument to the terrible feat;" at other times his heart misgives him, and he is cowed and abashed by his success. "The deed, no less than the attempt, confounds him." His mind is assailed by the stings of remorse, and full of "preternatural solicitings." His speeches and soliloquies are dark riddles on human life, baffling solution, and entangling him in their labyrinths. In thought he is absent and perplexed, sudden and desperate in act, from a distrust of his own resolution. His energy springs from the anxiety and agitation of his mind. His blindly rushing forward on the objects of his ambition and revenge, or his recoiling from them, equally betrays the harassed state of his feelings. . . . *Macbeth* (generally speaking) is done upon a stronger and more systematic principle of contrast than any other of Shakespeare's plays. It moves upon the verge of an abyss, and is a constant struggle between life and death. The action is desperate, and the reaction is dreadful. It is a huddling together of fierce extremes, a war of opposite natures which of them

to obviate suspicion, he ventures upon one of his speeches of double-refined hypocritical profession :—

“ Here had we now our country’s honour roof’d,  
Were the grac’d person of our Banquo present,  
Whom may I rather challenge for unkindness  
Than pity for mischance !”

Here the speaker miscalculates his powers of self-command. The very violence which the framing of this piece of falsehood compels him to do to his imagination makes the image of the horrid fact rush the more irresistibly upon his “heat-oppressed brain.” It could hardly be otherwise than that the effort to say, “Were the graced person of our Banquo present,” &c. &c., must force upon his very eyes the aspect of his victim’s person as he now vividly conceives it from the murderer’s description, with severed throat, and “twenty trenched gashes on his head.” The complete hallucination by which Macbeth takes his own “false creation” for a real, objective figure, apparent to all eyes, is but a repetition, under more aggravated excitement than ever, of what, we have seen, had taken place in him several times before, in the previous course of the drama.

GEORGE FLETCHER.—*Studies of Shakespeare* (1847), pp. 135—138.

### MRS. SIDDONS’S THEORY—THE GHOST VISIBLE TO LADY MACBETH.

SURROUNDED by their Court, in all the apparent ease and self-complacency of which their wretched souls are destitute, they are now seated at the royal banquet; and although, through the greater part of this scene, Lady Macbeth affects to resume her wonted domination over her husband, yet, notwithstanding all this self-control, her mind must even then be agonized by the complicated pangs of terror and remorse. For what imagination can conceive her tremors lest at every succeeding moment Macbeth, in his distraction, may confirm those suspicions, but ill-concealed under the loyal looks and cordial manners of their facile courtiers, when, with smothered terror, yet domineering indignation, she exclaims, upon his agitation at the ghost of Banquo, “Are you a man?” [III. iv. 60—68]. Dying with fear, yet assuming the utmost composure, she returns to her stately canopy, and with trembling nerves, having tottered up the steps to her throne, that bad eminence, she entertains her wondering guests with frightful smiles, with over-acted attention, and with fitful graciousness; painfully, yet incessantly, labouring to divert their attention from her husband. Whilst writhing thus under internal agonies, her restless and terrifying glances towards Macbeth, in spite of all her efforts to suppress them, have thrown the whole table into amazement; and

the murderer then suddenly breaks up the assembly by the confession of his horrors : [III. iv. 110—116].

It is now the time to inform you of an idea which I have conceived of Lady Macbeth's character, which perhaps will appear as fanciful as that which I have adopted respecting the style of her beauty ; and in order to justify this idea, I must carry you back to the scene immediately preceding the banquet, in which you will recollect the following dialogue : [III. ii. 36—55]. Now it is not possible that she should hear all these ambiguous hints about Banquo without being too well aware that a sudden, lamentable fate awaits him. Yet so far from offering any opposition to Macbeth's murderous designs, she even hints, I think, at the facility, if not the expediency, of destroying both Banquo and [Fleance] when she observes that "in them Nature's copy is not eterne." Having, therefore, now filled the measure of her crimes, I have imagined that the last appearance of Banquo's ghost became no less visible to her eyes than it became to those of her husband. Yes, the spirit of noble Banquo has smilingly filled up, even to overflowing, and now commends to her own lips the ingredients of her poisoned chalice.

MRS. SIDDONS.—"Remarks on the Character of Lady Macbeth," in *Campbell's Life of Mrs. Siddons*. (*Macbeth*, ed. H. H. Furness, pp. 418, 419.)

### SHAKESPEARE'S TREATMENT OF THE SUPERNATURAL.

IN the great world therefore of woman, as the interpreter of the shifting phases and the lunar varieties of that mighty changeable planet, that lovely satellite of man, Shakespeare stands not the first only, not the original only, but is yet the sole authentic oracle of truth. Woman, therefore, the beauty of the female mind, this is one great field of his power. The supernatural world, the world of apparitions, that is another : for reasons which it would be easy to give, reasons emanating from the gross mythology of the ancients, no Grecian,<sup>1</sup> no Roman, could have conceived a ghost. That shadowy conception, the protesting apparition, the awful projection of the human conscience, belongs

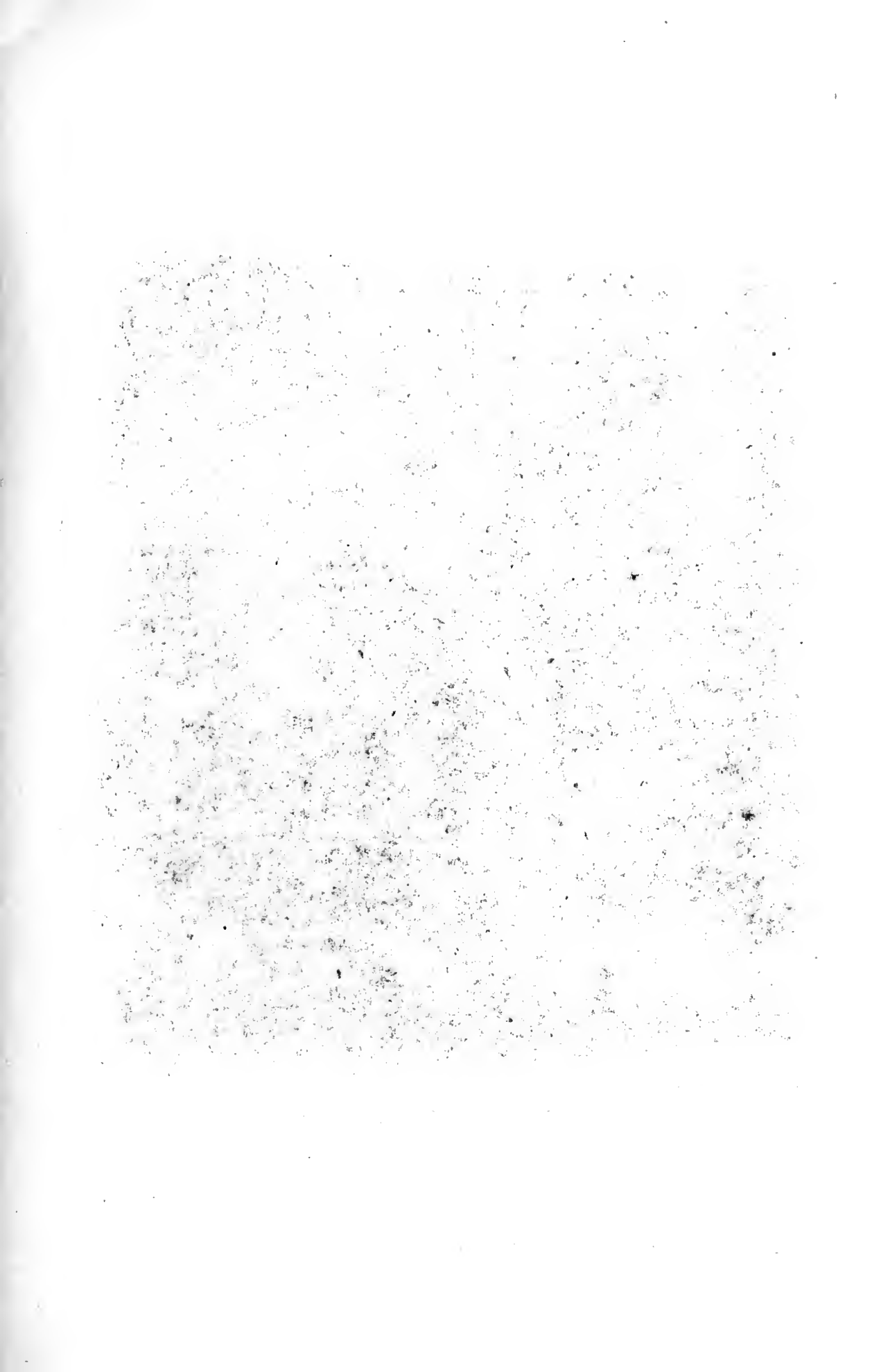
<sup>1</sup> It may be thought, however, by some readers, that Æschylus, in his fine phantom of Darius, has approached the English ghost. As a foreign ghost, we would wish (and we are sure our excellent readers would wish) to show every courtesy and attention to this apparition of Darius. It has the advantage of being royal, an advantage which it shares with the ghost of the royal Dane. Yet

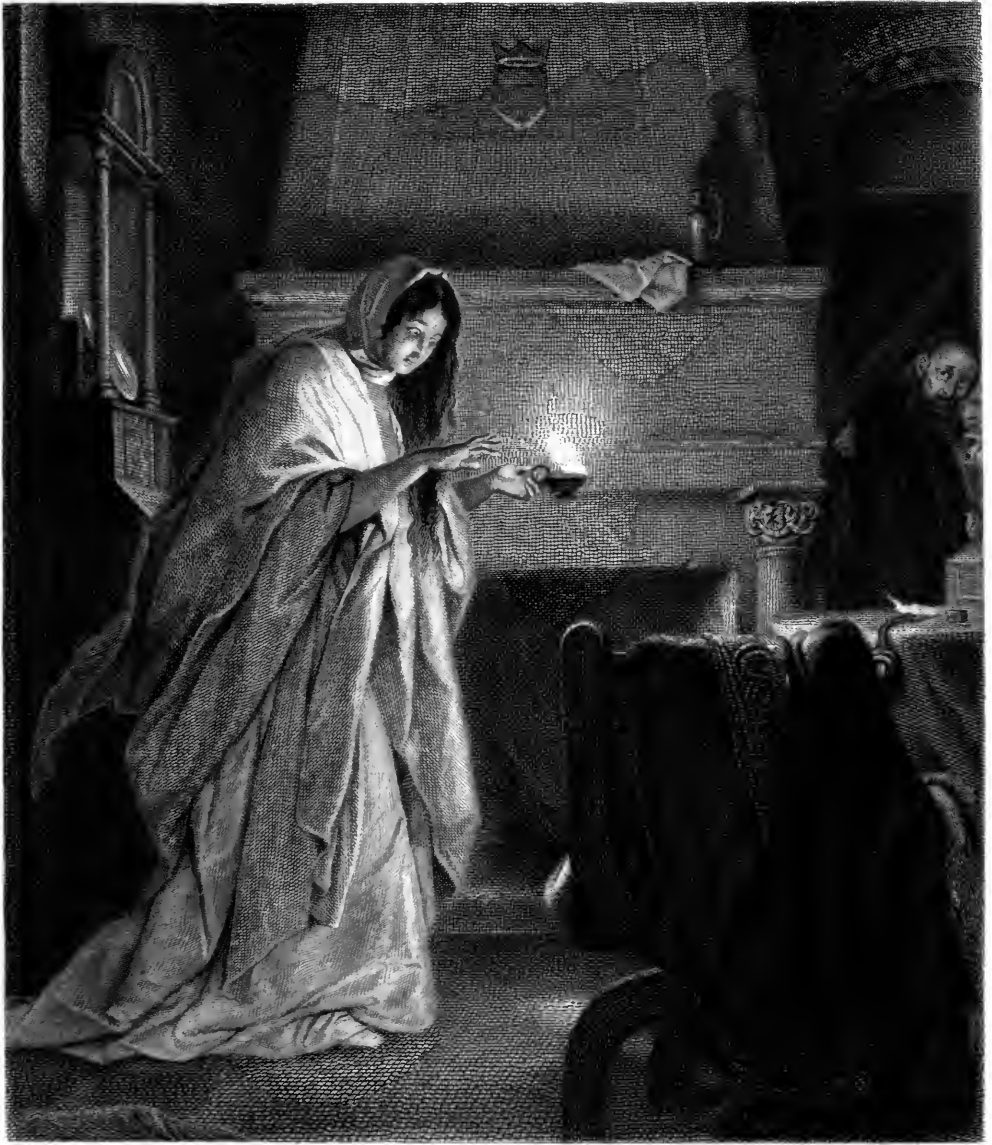
how different, how removed by a total world, from that or any of Shakespeare's ghosts ! Take that of Banquo, for instance : how shadowy, how unreal, yet how real ! Darius is a mere state ghost—a diplomatic ghost. But Banquo—he exists only for Macbeth : the guests do not see him, yet how solemn, how real, how heart-searching he is !

to the Christian mind : and in all Christendom, who, let us ask, who, but Shakespeare, has found the power for effectually working this mysterious mode of being? In summoning back to earth "the majesty of buried Denmark," how like an awful necromancer does Shakespeare appear! All the pomps and grandeurs which religion, which the grave, which the popular superstition had gathered about the subject of apparitions, are here converted to his purpose, and bend to one awful effect. The wormy grave brought into antagonism with the scenting of the early dawn; the trumpet of resurrection suggested, and again as an antagonist idea to the crowing of the cock (a bird ennobled in the Christian mythus by the part he is made to play at the Crucifixion); its starting "as a guilty thing" placed in opposition to its majestic expression of offended dignity when struck at by the partisans of the sentinels; its awful allusions to the secrets of its prison-house; its ubiquity, contrasted with its local presence; its aerial substance yet clothed in palpable armour; the heart-shaking solemnity of its language, and the appropriate scenery of its haunt, viz., the ramparts of a capital fortress, with no witnesses but a few gentlemen mounting guard at the dead of night,—what a mist, what a *mirage* of vapour, is here accumulated, through which the dreadful being in the centre looms upon us in far larger proportions than could have happened had it been insulated and left naked by this circumstantial pomp! In the *Tempest*, again, what new modes of life, preternatural, yet far as the poles from the spiritualities of religion. Ariel is in antithesis to Caliban! What is most ethereal to what is most animal! A phantom of air, an abstraction of the dawn and of vesper sunlights, a bodiless sylph on the one hand; on the other a gross carnal monster, like the Miltonic Asmodai, "the fleshliest incubus" among the fiends, and yet so far ennobled into interest by his intellectual power, and by the grandeur of misanthropy! In the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, again, we have the old traditional fairy, a lovely mode of preternatural life, remodified by Shakespeare's eternal talisman. Oberon and Titania remind us at first glance of Ariel; they approach, but how far they recede: they are like—"like, but oh, how different!" And in no other exhibition of this dreamy population of the moonlight forests and forest-lawns are the circumstantial proprieties of fairy life so exquisitely imagined, sustained, or expressed. The dialogue between Oberon and Titania is, of itself, and taken separately from its connection, one of the most delightful poetic scenes that literature affords. The witches in *Macbeth* are another variety of supernatural life, in which Shakespeare's power to enchant and to disenchant are alike portentous. The circumstances of the blasted heath, the army at a distance, the withered attire of the mysterious hags, and the choral litanies of their fiendish sabbath, are as finely imagined in their kind as those which herald and which surround the ghost in *Hamlet*. There we see the *positive* of Shakespeare's superior power. But now turn and look at the *negative*. At a time when the trials of witches, the royal book on demonology, and popular superstition (all so far useful, as they

prepared a basis of undoubting faith for the poet's serious use of such agencies), had degraded and polluted the ideas of these mysterious beings by many mean associations, Shakespeare does not fear to employ them in high tragedy (a tragedy moreover which, though not the very greatest of his efforts as an intellectual whole, nor as a struggle of passion, is *among* the greatest in any view, and positively *the* greatest for scenical grandeur, and in that respect makes the nearest approach of all English tragedies to the Greek model); he does not fear to introduce, for the same appalling effect as that for which Æschylus introduced the Eumenides, a triad of old women, concerning whom an English wit has remarked this grotesque peculiarity in the popular creed of that day,—that although potent over winds and storms, in league with powers of darkness, they yet stood in awe of the constable,—yet relying on his own supreme power to disenchant as well as to enchant, to create and to uncreate, he mixes these women and their dark machineries with the power of armies, with the agencies of kings, and the fortunes of martial kingdoms. Such was the sovereignty of this poet, so mighty its compass!

THOMAS DE QUINCEY.—*Works*, Vol. XV. (ed. 1873), pp. 78--82.





*St. Adamo del*

*F. Lindner sc.*

*Macbeth — Macbeth.*



## MACBETH.

## ACT V.

SCENE I. *Dunsinane. Ante-room in the Castle.**A Doctor of Physic and a waiting gentlewoman.*

\* \* \* \*

*Enter Lady MACBETH, with a taper.*

*Gentlewoman.* Lo you, here she comes ! This is her very guise ; and, upon my life, fast asleep. Observe her ; stand close.

*Doctor.* How came she by that light ?

*Gent.* Why, it stood by her : she has light by her continually ; 'tis her command.

*Doct.* You see, her eyes are open.

*Gent.* Ay, but their sense is shut.

*Doct.* What is it she does now ? Look, how she rubs her hands.

*Gent.* It is an accustomed action with her, to seem thus washing her hands : I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.

*Lady M.* Yet here's a spot.

*Doct.* Hark ! she speaks : I will set down what comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

*Lady M.* Out, damned spot ! out, I say !—One : two : why, then 'tis time to do't.—Hell is murky !—Fie, my lord, fie ! a soldier, and afeard ? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account ?—Yet who would have

thought the old man to have had so much blood in him.

*Doct.* Do you mark that ?

*Lady M.* The thane of Fife had a wife : where is she now ?—What, will these hands ne'er be clean ?—No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that : you mar all with this starting.

*Doct.* Go to, go to ; you have known what you should not.

*Gent.* She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that : heavens knows what she has known.

*Lady M.* Here's the smell of blood still : all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh !

*Doct.* What a sigh is there ! The heart is sorely charged.

*Gent.* I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

*Doct.* Well, well, well,—

*Gent.* Pray God it be, sir.

*Doct.* This disease is beyond my practice : yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep who have died holily in their beds.

*Lady M.* Wash your hands, put on your nightgown ; look not so pale.—I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried ; he cannot come out on's grave.

*Doct.* Even so ?

*Lady M.* To bed, to bed ! there's knocking at the gate : come, come, come, come, give me your hand. What's done cannot be undone—  
To bed, to bed, to bed ! [Exit.]

## LADY MACBETH.

IN this astonishing creature one sees a woman in whose bosom the passion of ambition has almost obliterated all the characteristics of human nature ; in whose composition are associated all the subjugating powers of intellect and all the charms and graces of personal beauty. You will probably not agree with me as to the character of that beauty ; yet, perhaps, this difference of opinion will be entirely attributable to the difficulty of your imagination disengaging itself from that idea of the person of her representative which you have been so long accustomed to contemplate. According to my notion, it is of

that character which I believe is generally allowed to be most captivating to the other sex,—fair feminine, nay, perhaps, even fragile,—

“ Fair as the forms that, wove in Fancy’s loom,  
Float in light visions round the poet’s head.”

Such a combination only, respectable in energy and strength of mind, and captivating in feminine loveliness, could have composed a charm of such potency as to fascinate the mind of a hero so dauntless, a character so amiable, so honourable as Macbeth ;—to seduce him to brave all the dangers of the present and all the terrors of a future world ; and we are constrained, even whilst we abhor his crimes, to pity the infatuated victim of such a thralldom. His letters, which have informed her of the predictions of those preternatural beings who accosted him on the heath, have lighted up into daring and desperate determinations all those pernicious slumbering fires which the enemy of man is ever watchful to awaken in the bosoms of his unwary victims. To his direful suggestions she is so far from offering the least opposition, as not only to yield up her soul to them, but moreover to invoke the sightless ministers of remorseless cruelty to extinguish in her breast all those compunctious visitings of nature which otherwise might have been mercifully interposed to counteract, and perhaps eventually to overcome, their unholy instigations. But having impiously delivered herself up to the excitements of hell, the pitifulness of heaven itself is withdrawn from her, and she is abandoned to the guidance of the demons whom she has invoked.

Behold her now, with wasted form, with wan and haggard countenance, her starry eyes glazed with the ever-burning fever of remorse, and on their lids the shadows of death. Her ever-restless spirit wanders in troubled dreams about her dismal apartment ; and whether waking or asleep, the smell of innocent blood incessantly haunts her imagination :—

“ Here’s the smell of blood still : all the perfumes  
Of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand !”

How beautifully contrasted is this exclamation with the bolder image of Macbeth in expressing the same feeling :—

“ Will all great Neptune’s ocean wash the blood  
Clean from this hand ?”

And how appropriately either sex illustrates the same idea !

During this appalling scene, which, to my sense, is the most so of them all, the wretched creature, in imagination, acts over again the accumulated horrors of her whole conduct.

These dreadful images, accompanied with the agitations they have induced, have obviously accelerated her untimely end ; for in a few moments tidings of her death are brought to her unhappy husband. It is conjectured that she died by her own hand. Too certain it is that she dies and makes no sign. I have now to account to you for the weakness which I have ascribed to Macbeth. . . .

Please to observe, that he (I must think pusillanimously, when I compare his conduct with her forbearance,) has been continually pouring out his miseries to his wife. His heart has therefore been eased, from time to time, by unloading its weight of woe ; while she, on the contrary, has perseveringly endured in silence the utmost anguish of a wounded spirit. . . . Her feminine nature, her delicate structure, it is too evident are soon overwhelmed by the enormous pressure of her crimes. Yet it will be granted that she gives proofs of a naturally higher toned mind than that of Macbeth. The different physical powers of the two sexes are finely delineated, in the different effects which their mutual crimes produce. Her frailer frame, and keener feelings, have now sunk under the struggle—his robust and less sensitive constitution has not only resisted it, but bears him on to deeper wickedness, and to experience the fatal fecundity of crime. . . .

In one point of view at least, this guilty pair extort from us, in spite of ourselves, a certain respect and approbation. Their grandeur of character sustains them both above recrimination (the despicable accustomed resort of vulgar minds) in adversity : for the wretched husband, though almost impelled into this gulf of destruction by the instigations of his wife, feels no abatement of his love for her, while she, on her part, appears to have known no tenderness for him, till, with a heart bleeding at every pore, she beholds in him the miserable victim of their mutual ambition. Unlike the first frail pair in Paradise, they spent not the fruitless hours in mutual accusation.

[Mrs. Siddons, on p. 35 gives the following account of the first time that she had to play Lady Macbeth:]—

It was my custom to study my characters at night, when all the domestic cares and business of the day were over. On the night preceding that in which I was to appear in this part for the first time, I shut myself up as usual, when all the family were retired and commenced my study of Lady Macbeth. As the character is very short, I thought I should soon accomplish it. Being then only twenty years of age, I believed, as many others do believe, that little more is necessary than to get the words into my head ; for the necessity of discrimination, and the development of character, at that time of my life, had scarcely entered into my imagination. But, to proceed : I went on with tolerable composure, in the silence of the night (a night I can never forget), till I came to the assassination scene, when the horrors of the scene rose to a degree that made it impossible for me to get farther. I snatched up my candle, and hurried out of the room, in a

paroxysm of terror. My dress was of silk, and the rustling of it, as I ascended the stairs to go to bed, seemed to my panic-struck fancy like the movement of a spectre pursuing me. At last I reached my chamber, where I found my husband fast asleep. I clapt my candlestick down upon the table, without the power of putting the candle out, and threw myself on my bed, without daring to stay even to take off my clothes. At peep of day I rose to resume my task; but so little did I know of my part when I appeared in it, at night, that my shame and confusion cured me of procrastinating my business for the remainder of my life.

About six years afterwards I was called upon to act the same character in London. By this time I had perceived the difficulty of assuming a personage with whom no one feeling of common general nature was congenial or assistant. One's own heart could prompt one to express, with some degree of truth, the sentiments of a mother, a daughter, a wife, a lover, a sister, &c., &c., but to adopt this character must be an effort of the judgment alone.

Therefore, it was with the utmost diffidence, nay, terror, that I undertook it, and with the additional fear of Mrs. Prichard's reputation in it before my eyes. The dreaded first night at length arrived, when, just as I had finished ~~my toilette~~<sup>my dressing</sup>, and was pondering with fearfulness my first appearance in the grand, fiendish part, comes Mr. Sheridan, knocking at my door, and insisting, in spite of all my entreaties not to be interrupted at this to me tremendous moment, to be admitted. He would not be denied admittance, for he protested he must speak to me on a circumstance which so deeply concerned my own interest, that it was of the most serious nature. Well, after much squabbling, I was compelled to admit him, that I might dismiss him the sooner, and compose myself before the play began. But, what was my distress and astonishment when I found that he wanted me, even at this moment of anxiety and terror, to adopt another mode of acting the sleeping scene. He told me he had heard with the greatest surprise and concern that I meant to act it without holding the candle in my hand; and, when I urged the impracticability of washing out that 'damned spot' with the vehemence that was certainly implied both by her own words and by those of her gentlewoman, he insisted, that if I did put the candle out of my hand, it would be thought a presumptuous innovation, as Mrs. Prichard had always retained it in hers. My mind, however, was made up, and it was then too late to make me alter it; for I was too agitated to adopt another method. My deference for Mr. Sheridan's taste and judgment was, however, so great, that, had he proposed the alteration whilst it was possible for me to change my own plan, I should have yielded to his suggestion; though even then it would have been against my own opinion, and my observation of the accuracy with which somnambulists perform all the acts of waking persons. The scene, of course, was acted as I had myself conceived it, and the innovation, as Mr. Sheridan called it, was received with approbation. Mr. Sheridan

himself came to me, after the play, and most ingenuously congratulated me on my obstinacy. When he was gone out of the room I began to undress; and while standing up before my glass and taking off my mantle, a diverting circumstance occurred to chase away the feelings of this anxious night; for while I was repeating, and endeavouring to call to mind the appropriate tone and action to the following words, "Here's the smell of blood still!" my dresser innocently exclaimed, "Dear me, ma'am, how very hysterical you are to-night; I protest and vow, ma'am, it was not blood, but rose-pink and water; for I saw the property-man mix it up, with my own eyes."

MRS. SIDDONS—"Remarks on the Character of Lady Macbeth" in *Campbell's Life of Mrs. Siddons* (quoted in H. H. Furness's *Variorum Shakespeare—Macbeth*, pp. 415—421).

### HOW TO ACT LADY MACBETH.

AFTER all, this is the secret in acting Lady Macbeth: to permit, in the very midst of the intoxication of ambition, in the very midst of an iron resolution, those accents of nature<sup>1</sup> to be heard which betray a secret horror and the shattering of her nerves. Even when she seeks to restore to her husband his lost repose, and to banish terror from his breast, by assuming an air of gaiety, when she strives with tender care to ward off from him the ill effects of his horror at the sight of Banquo's ghost, even then we can detect in delicate touches the struggle of the powers of evil with her invincible human nature. And when Lady Macbeth tells her husband that he needs the season of all natures, sleep, her face and her voice unconsciously confess that her couch also sleep does not visit. The phrases with which she endeavours to restore Macbeth's self-command ought to be made to reveal, by the expression of voice and eye, that her life is approaching its destruction.

In the fifth act we behold the distracted woman. We are made aware of the changed aspect of Lady Macbeth's ruined life by the secret whispering of her attendants, which conceal what they forebode. Night-vigils of agony have furrowed her face, the wonted fire of her eyes has burnt out, a vacant stare betrays the mental desolation, her sleep-walking shows a restless hunted soul. One thought alone is breathed from this torn breast, but one woe swells from the desolated depths. Everything here is stamped with the character of a completely involuntary agent; her accents betray the working of the spirit from the abyss that inexorably demands its victim. Over the whole scene broods that mysterious tone which intimates infinitely more than it directly says, and in which

<sup>1</sup> "Had he not resembled my father as he slept, I had done 't."

there hovers the grisly memory of the inexpiable past and the deadness of soul to all things temporal. The horrors of the past, like ever-present demons, close around the heart, the lamp of life flickers dim, and tells of the speedy end of a ruined existence.

H. T. RÖTSCHER.—*Cyclus dramatischer Charaktere*, (Vol. I., pp. 140 sqq. : Berlin, 1846,) quoted by H. H. Furness, *Variorum Shakespeare—Macbeth*, pp. 466, 467.

## KING LEAR.

## ACT V.

SCENE II. *A Field between the Two Camps.*

*Re-enter* LEAR, *with* CORDELIA *dead in his arms*; EDGAR, Captain, *and others following.*

*Lear.* Howl, howl, howl, howl! O, you are men of stones:

Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so  
That heaven's vault should crack. She's gone  
for ever!

I know when one is dead, and when one lives;  
She's dead as earth. Lend me a looking-glass;  
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,  
Why, then she lives.

*Kent.* Is this the promised end?

*Edg.* Or image of that horror?

*Alb.* Fall, and cease!

*Lear.* This feather stirs; she lives! if it be so,  
It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows  
That ever I have felt.

*Kent.* [*Kneeling*] O my good master!

*Lear.* Prithce, away.

*Edg.* 'Tis noble Kent, your friend.

*Lear.* A plague upon you, murderers, traitors  
all!

I might have saved her; now she's gone for  
ever!

Cordelia, Cordelia! stay a little. Ha!

What is't thou say'st? Her voice was ever  
soft,

Gentle, and low, an excellent thing in woman.

I kill'd the slave that was a-hanging thee.

*Capt.* 'Tis true, my lords, he did.

*Lear.* Did I not, fellow?  
I have seen the day, with my good biting falchion  
I would have made them skip: I am old now,  
And these same crosses spoil me.

\* \* \*

*Enter a Captain.*

*Capt.* Edmund is dead, my lord.

*Alb.* That's but a trifle here.  
You lords and noble friends, know our intent.  
What comfort to this great decay may come  
Shall be applied: for us, we will resign,  
During the life of this old majesty,  
To him our absolute power: [*To Edgar and*  
*Kent*] you, to your rights;

With boot, and such addition as your honours  
Have more than merited. All friends shall taste  
The wages of their virtue, and all foes  
The cup of their deservings. O, see, see!

*Lear.* And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no,  
no life!

Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,  
And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no  
more,

Never, never, never, never, never!  
Pray you, undo this button: thank you, sir.

Do you see this? Look on her, look, her lips,  
Look there, look there! [*Dies.*]

*Edg.* He faints! My lord, my lord!

*Kent.* Break, heart; I prithee, break!

*Edg.* Look up, my lord.

*Kent.* Vex not his ghost: O, let him pass!  
he hates him much

That would upon the rack of this tough world  
Stretch him out longer.

*Edg.* He is gone indeed.

THE TRAGEDY OF "KING LEAR."<sup>1</sup>

HIS ground chosen, the scene which he will represent determined, his foundation dug, Shakespeare takes of everything, and builds his work. Marvellous structure! He takes tyranny, which afterwards he will transform into feebleness—Lear; he takes treason—Edmund; he takes devotion—Kent; he takes ingratitude, beginning with a caress, and he gives this monster two heads—Goneril, whom the legend names Gonerille, and Regan, whom the legend names Ragaü; he takes fatherhood; he takes royalty; he takes feudalism; he takes ambition; he takes madness, which he divides into three parts, and brings three madmen face to face, the King's fool, a madman by profession, Edgar, son of Gloucester, a madman for self-defence, the King, a madman through wretchedness. It is upon the summit of this tragic pile that he plants and supports Cordelia.

There are certain formidable Cathedral towers, as for example, the giralda of Seville, which with their spirals, their stairs, their sculptures, their vaults, their cæcums, their aerial cells, their sounding chambers, their bells, their outcry, and their mass, and their spire, and all their vastness, seem wholly made to bear up an angel opening upon the summit her golden wings. Such is the drama of *King Lear*.

The father is the pretext for the daughter. This admirable human creation, Lear, serves as a support for that ineffable, divine creation, Cordelia. This huge chaos of crimes, of vices, of madness, and of misery, exists for the sake of the apparition of this shining virtue. Shakespeare, bearing in his soul Cordelia, created this tragedy, like a god, who possessing a dawn of day for which he would find a place, creates a world expressly to manifest it.

And what a figure is the father! what a caryatid! He is a man bowed down. All that he does is to change his burdens, always for heavier ones. The feebleness of the old man becomes, so much the more does the weight increase. He lives under an overload. He bears first empire, then ingratitude, then isolation, then despair, then hunger and thirst, then madness, then the whole weight of nature. The clouds gather above his head, the forests fling down their shadow upon him, the hurricane descends upon his neck, the tempest makes his garments heavy as lead, the rain is heavy on his shoulders, he walks bent down and haggard, as if the two knees of the Night were on his back. Dismayed and immense, he flings abroad to the whirlwinds and the hailstorms this epic cry, "Why do ye hate me, tempests? Why persecute me? *Ye are not my daughters.*" And then all is ended; the light dies down, reason droops and disappears; Lear is in his infancy. Ah!

<sup>1</sup> The passage given from Victor Hugo, though it altogether misconceives the play in representing Cordelia and not the King as its centre, is in some

respects finely appreciative, and is interesting as highly characteristic of the writer.



this old man, he is an infant ! then his need must be a mother. His daughter appears. His only daughter, Cordelia. For the two others, Regan and Goneril, are his daughters only so far as to give them a right to the name of parricides.

Cordelia draws near—"Sir, do you know me?" "You are a spirit, I know : when did you die?" the old man replies, with the sublime penetration of a mind that is astray. From this moment the adorable suckling begins. Cordelia sets herself to nourish this old despairing soul, which in hatred is dying of inanition. Cordelia nourishes Lear with love, and courage revives ; she nourishes him with honour, and the smile returns ; she nourishes him with hope, and confidence returns ; she nourishes him with wisdom, and reason returns. Lear, convalescent, reascends, and step by step recovers life. The infant becomes an old man once more ; the old man becomes a man. And now he is happy, that wretched one. It is upon this blossoming of happiness that the catastrophe is flung. Alas ! there are traitors, there are betrayers, there are murderers. Cordelia dies. There is nothing more heartrending. The old man is stunned, he ceases to understand anything, and embracing the dead body he expires. He dies upon the dead one. He is not obliged to undergo the supreme despair of remaining behind her among the living, a poor shadow, feeling the empty place in his heart, and seeking his soul which has been borne away by the gentle being who is departed. O God ! those whom Thou lovest thou dost not allow to live on. To remain after the angel's flight, to be the father and the orphan of his child, to be the eye which no longer sees the light, to be the darkened heart which knows joy no more, to stretch forth now and again hands into the darkness and try to grasp again some one who was there,—and where is she now ?—to feel forgotten in the fact of her departure,—to be henceforth a man who comes and goes before a sepulchre, not received, not admitted,—that is a gloomy destiny. Thou hast done well, O Poet, to slay this old man !<sup>1</sup>

VICTOR HUGO.—*William Shakespeare* (ed. 1869), pp. 207—209.

### THE LAST SCENE OF "KING LEAR."

THE last scene, in which Lear's tough heart at length breaks over the murdered body of his dear child, is one of those masterpieces of tragic art, before which we are disposed to stand silent in awed admiration. The indurated sympathies of science, however, may examine even the death scene. The first thing to remark is, that there is no insanity in it—that Lear might have spoken and acted thus if his mind had never wandered. He has found Edmund's mercenary murderer hanging Cordelia, so

<sup>1</sup> A pathetic interest is added to this passage by recollecting that Victor Hugo many years since

lost his daughter by drown'ng, and has recently survived the death of his two sons.

as "to lay the blame upon her own despair." He kills the slave, and with the last remnant of strength carries the dear body into the midst of that heart-struck conclave where the sisters who "desperately are dead" already lie. At first he is under the excitement of mental agony, expressing itself in the wild wail :

"Howl, howl, howl, howl! O, you are men of stones:  
Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so  
That heaven's vault should crack. She's gone for ever!"

Then follows the intense cruel anxiety of false hope, followed by quick resolve and reasonable action: the demand for the looking-glass: the trial of the feather, to ascertain if any faint imperceptible breath remains. Then, the sustaining but fatal excitement over, leaden grief settles upon the heart, and benumbs the feelings to every sense save one. Noble Kent comes too late with the prepared surprise of his discovery. The wreck of Kinghood sits in the midst, with no eyes, no thoughts for living friend or dead foe, for no object save one—the voided temple of his love, now a limp carcass in his nerveless lap. What a group for a sculptor, Lear and Cordelia, types of manly grandeur and female grace, with but half a life between the two! The feather test has failed, and the sweet breath refuses to mist or stain the clear surface of the stone; conviction arrives that "now she's gone for ever," and there is no fire left in the once ardent heart for one more angry word, no thought except the passing one of satisfied revenge. She's gone for ever—doubt of the stern fact is past, and death presses on his own heart; feeling is mercifully blunted and thought obscured; imagination is the last to congeal; desire, father to the thought, makes the dear lips move, and the soft voice invite to follow:

"Cordelia, Cordelia! stay a little. Ha!  
What is't thou say'st? Her voice was ever soft,  
Gentle and low, an excellent thing in women."

The loyal friends around, Albany and Kent and Edgar, strive to arouse his attention from the gathering stupor, which they do not yet recognize as that of death; and in banished Kent, now reinstated in the appurtenances and lendings of his rank, an object bound to stimulate attention and curiosity, is at hand. But he has put off the revelation of his faithful service until it is too late to be understood. The King recognizes his person, indeed, even through the gathering mists of death, which, beginning at the heart weakens the circulation through the brain and dims the sight. How constantly does the dying man complain that the room is dark, or that he cannot see. "Where is your servant Caius?" brings a mechanical thought, trifling as it seems, but in true place. The unreflecting movement of the mind, the excito-motory action of the brain, as some would call it, a thought of simple suggestion, which is the last kind of thought the dying brain

can entertain, just as involuntary muscular action endures after voluntary power of movement is lost. The new idea, that Caius and Kent are one, cannot be entertained ; this requires comparison and a greater power of cerebration than the feeble tide of blood which is now percolating the brain can provide for. . . . Stupefied by dire misfortune the bystanders are blind to the near approach of the " veiled shadow with the keys," who is at hand to release this loved and hated one of fortune from his eminence of care. Albany proceeds to make state arrangements, to promise the wages of virtue and the cup of deservings to friends and foes, and to resign his own absolute power to the old majesty, whose heart is beating slower and fainter, whose face is blanching and whose features are pinching as the life current passes on its way in ever slower and smaller waves, until at length the change of aspect suddenly strikes the dull Duke, and he exclaims, " Oh ! see, see ! " and then one flicker more of reflecting thought, one gentle request, " Pray you undo this button," expressing the physical feeling of want of air ; one yearning look on her who'll " come no more," and the silver thread is loosed, the golden bowl for ever broken.

JOHN CHARLES BUCKNILL, M.D.—*The Mad Folk of Shakespeare*, pp. 231—35.

#### LEAR IMPOSSIBLE TO REPRESENT ON THE STAGE.

To see Lear acted,—to see an old man tottering about the stage with a walking-stick, turned out of doors by his daughter on a rainy night, has nothing in it but what is painful and disgusting. We want to take him into shelter and relieve him. That is all the feeling which the acting of Lear ever produced in me. But the Lear of Shakspeare cannot be acted. The contemptible machinery by which they mimic the storm which he goes out in, is not more inadequate to represent the horrors of the real elements, than any actor can be to represent Lear : they might more easily propose to personate the Satan of Milton upon a stage, or one of Michael Angelo's terrible figures. The greatness of Lear is not in corporal dimensions but in intellectual : the explosions of his passion are terrible as a volcano ; they are storms turning up and disclosing to the bottom that sea, his mind, with all its vast riches. It is his mind which is laid bare. This case of flesh and blood seems too insignificant to be thought on ; even as he himself neglects it. On the stage we see nothing but corporal infirmities and weakness, the impotence of rage ; while we read it we see not Lear, but we are Lear—we are in his mind, we are sustained by a grandeur which baffles the malice of daughters and storms ; in the aberrations of his reason, we discover a mighty, irregular power of reasoning, immethodised from the ordinary purposes of life, but exerting its powers, as the wind blows where it listeth, at will upon the corruptions

and abuses of mankind. What have looks or tones to do with that sublime identification of his age with that of the *heavens themselves*, when, in his reproaches to them for conniving at the injustice of his children, he reminds them that "they themselves are old?" What gesture shall we appropriate to this? What has the voice or the eye to do with such things? But the play is beyond all art, as the tamperings with it show: it is too hard and stony; it must have love-scenes and a happy ending. It is not enough that Cordelia is a daughter—she must shine as a lover too. Tate has put his hook in the nostrils of this Leviathan, for Garrick and his followers, the showmen of the scene, to draw the mighty beast about more easily. A happy ending!—as if the living martyrdom that Lear had gone through,—the flaying of his feelings alive, did not make a fair dismissal from the stage of life, the only decorous thing for him. If he is to live and be happy after, if he could sustain this world's burden after, why all this pudder and preparation—why torment us with all this unnecessary sympathy? As if the childish pleasure of getting his gilt robe and sceptre again could tempt him to act over again his misused station—as if, at his years and with his experience, anything were left but to die.

CHARLES LAMB.—*On the Tragedies of Shakspeare, considered with reference to stage-representation.*

### WHY MUST CORDELIA DIE?

AND now why must she die? I have said Shakespeare was no arbitrary homicide. Was it not possible, then, that Cordelia should live? In the first place, it must be noted that Cordelia lands in England at the head of a French army, and the national sentiment, strong always—boisterously strong in the Elizabethan age—demanded that the enterprise should therefore fail. Albany, for instance, was on Lear's side, and would not have opposed any means of avenging him, compatible with his patriotism. But he could not let foreign troops overrun the dear free soil of this island.

"Where I could not be honest,  
I never yet was valiant; for this business,  
It touches us as France invades the land,  
Not bolds the king, with others, whom, I fear,  
Most just and heavy causes make oppose."

But quite apart from this national reason, there are two others of deep ethical moment that may explain the awful catastrophe. One is this: her own nature betrays her. Is

she not, as we have seen, the child of impulse? Was it not so in her first appearance, and is it not so in her last? And can such natures thrive in our air? Does not the sword ever overhang them? And in times of violence like that pictured by Shakespeare in *King Lear*, will it not fall? She cannot take care of herself in this world. She is all for truth, as we first see her. Home and wealth, and even her father's smile, are nothing to her by the side of that sunless treasure. Later on in her pure life, she is all for love; she thinks of nothing else but relieving her father; she gives not a thought to her own safety and protection in an enemy's country. Now, here on this earth it goes hard with such natures. They belong to a different sphere; they cannot conform to our habits of self-consideration and prudence. These are the martyrs of this world and in their hands are palms.

“ Upon such sacrifices  
The gods themselves throw incense.”

Lastly, when evil powers are let loose, mischief and ruin will ensue not only on those who have enchained them, but on the innocent who fall within their baleful reach. They are like the winds in that bag Æolus gave Odysseus in the old story. Once let them fly out and rave, and who shall count the shipwrecks that shall strew the shores? The foolish sailors, who did the deed, may cry and moan with a real repentance; but the waves will soon smother their wretched shrieks, and the blasts but howl a dirge for them. Can we think that Goneril and Regan could have power placed in their hands, and no harm come of it except to the unwise donor? Does not the rain fall on the just and the unjust? Yes; and so does the rain of ruin, in the hour and power of evil. The whirlwind, when once it rages, does not pick and choose its victims. Goneril's spite will not spare Cordelia, when once it has a chance of venting itself upon her; the chance comes, and it does not spare her. Let Lear bemoan his folly as he may, yet alas! alas! he cannot cancel it. By all means let the wicked man repent, let him turn away from his wickedness, and let him save his soul alive, as best he may; but do not let him flatter himself that he can certainly undo his crime.

“ Nescit vox missa reverti.”

When blood is shed can it be gathered up again? And so Cordelia dies: not only Goneril and Regan consumed by their own guilt as by a living fire; and Cornwall stabbed by outraged humanity in the shape of a peasant; and Edmund pierced by the righteous sword of Edgar; and Gloster crushed by the weight of his own troubles; and the King broken-hearted.

In that last scene, when the house of Lear is on the verge of extinction, as the dying

King stoops over the corpse of Saint Cordelia, well may Kent, who has himself a journey shortly to go, ask, "Is this the promised end?" He means, "Is this the day of judgment?" "Or image of that horror?" says Edgar. Yes; it is an image of that horror, if we can understand. So

"draw the curtain close,  
And let us all to meditation."

J. W. HALES.—*King Lear*, in *The Fortnightly Review*, January 1875, pp. 100—102.





*C. Spitzler del.*

*H. Schmidt sc.*

*Antony und Kleopatra - Antony and Cleopatra*



## ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

## ACT V.

SCENE II. *Alexandria. A Room in the Monument.**Re-enter IRAS with a robe, crown, &c.*

*Cleo.* Give me my robe, put on my crown ;  
I have  
Immortal longings in me : now no more  
The juice of Egypt's grape shall moist this lip :  
Yare, yare, good Iras ; quick. Methinks I hear  
Antony call ; I see him rouse himself  
To praise my noble act ; I hear him mock  
The luck of Cæsar, which the gods give men  
To excuse their after wrath : husband, I come :  
Now to that name my courage prove my title !  
I am fire and air ; my other elements  
I give to baser life. So ; have you done ?  
Come then, and take the last warmth of my lips.  
Farewell, kind Charmian ; Iras, long farewell.  
*[Kisses them. Iras falls and dies.*  
Have I the asp in my lips ? Dost fall ?  
If thou and nature can so gently part,  
The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch,  
Which hurts, and is desired. Dost thou lie still ?  
If thus thou vanishest, thou tell'st the world  
It is not worth leave-taking.

*Char.* Dissolve, thick cloud, and rain ; that  
I may say,

The gods themselves do weep ;

*Cleo.* This proves me base ;  
If she first meet the curled Antony,  
He'll make demand of her, and spend that kiss  
Which is my heaven to have. Come, thou  
mortal wretch,

*[To an asp, which she applies to her breast.*  
With thy sharp teeth this knot intricate  
Of life at once untie : poor venomous fool,  
Be angry, and despatch. O, couldst thou speak,  
That I might hear thee call great Cæsar ass  
Unpolicied ;

*Char.* O eastern star !

*Cleo.* Peace, peace !

Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,  
That sucks the nurse asleep ?

*Char.* O, break ! O, break !

*Cleo.* As sweet as balm, as soft as air, as  
gentle,—

O Antony !—Nay, I will take thee too :

*[Applying another asp to her arm.*  
What should I stay— *[dies.*

*Char.* In this vile world ? So, fare thee well.  
Now boast thee, death, in thy possession lies  
A lass unparallel'd. Downy windows, close ;  
And golden Phœbus never be beheld  
Of eyes again so royal ! Your crown's awry ;  
I'll mend it, and then play.

## "ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA."

SHAKESPEARE can be complimented only by comparison with himself : all other eulogies are either heterogeneous, as when they are in reference to Spenser or Milton ; or they are flat truisms, as when he is gravely preferred to Corneille, Racine, or even his own immediate successors, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger and the rest. The highest praise, or rather form of praise, of this play, which I can offer in my own mind, is the doubt which the perusal always occasions in me, whether the *Antony and Cleopatra* is not, in all exhibitions of a giant power in its strength and vigour of maturity, a formidable rival of *Macbeth*, *Lear*, *Hamlet*, and *Othello*. *Feliciter audax* is the motto for its style, comparatively with that of Shakespeare's other works, even as it is the general motto of all his works, compared with

those of other poets. Be it remembered, too, that this happy valiancy of style is but the representative and the result of all the material excellences so expressed.

This play should be perused in mental contrast with *Romeo and Juliet*, as the love of passion and appetite opposed to the love of affection and instinct. But the art displayed in the character of Cleopatra is profound; in this, especially, that the sense of criminality in her passion is lessened by our insight into its depth and energy, at the very moment that we cannot but perceive that the passion itself springs out of the habitual craving of a licentious nature, and that it is supported and reinforced by voluntary stimulus and sought-for associations, instead of blossoming out of spontaneous emotion.

Of all Shakespeare's historical plays *Antony and Cleopatra* is by far the most wonderful. There is not one in which he has followed history so minutely, and yet there are few in which he impresses the notion of angelic strength so much; perhaps none in which he impresses it more strongly. This is greatly owing to the manner in which the fiery force is sustained throughout, and to the numerous momentary flashes of nature counteracting the historic abstraction. As a wonderful specimen of the way in which Shakespeare lives up to the very end of this play, read the last part of the concluding scene. And if you would feel the judgment as well as the genius of Shakespeare in your heart's core, compare this astonishing drama with Dryden's *All for Love*.

S. T. COLERIDGE.—*Notes and Lectures on Shakespeare*, pp. 137-38 (ed. 1874).

### THE CHARACTER OF CLEOPATRA.

OF all Shakespeare's female characters Miranda and Cleopatra appear to me the most wonderful. The first, unequalled as a poetic conception: the latter, miraculous as a work of art. If we could make a regular classification of his characters, these would form the two extremes of simplicity and complexity; and all his other characters would be found to fill up some shade or gradation between these two.

Great crimes, springing from high passions, grafted on high qualities, are the legitimate source of tragic poetry. But to make the extreme of littleness produce an effect like grandeur—to make the excess of frailty produce an effect like power—to heap up together all that is most unsubstantial, frivolous, vain, contemptible, and variable till the worthlessness be lost in the magnitude, and a sense of the sublime spring from the very elements of littleness—to do this, belonged only to Shakespeare, that worker of miracles. Cleopatra is a brilliant antithesis; a compound of contradictions of all that we most hate with what we most admire. The whole character is the triumph of the external over the innate; and yet, like one of her country's hieroglyphics, though she present at first view a splendid and perplexing anomaly, there is deep meaning and wondrous skill in the

apparent enigma, when we come to analyze and decipher it. But how are we to arrive at the solution of this glorious riddle, whose dazzling complexity continually mocks and eludes us? What is most astonishing in the character of Cleopatra is its antithetical construction—its consistent inconsistency, if I may use such an expression—which renders it quite impossible to reduce it to any elementary principles. It will, perhaps, be found on the whole, that vanity and the love of power predominate; but I dare not say it *is* so, for these qualities and a hundred others mingle into each other, and shift, and change, and glance away like the colours in a peacock's train.

In some others of Shakespeare's female characters, also remarkable for their complexity (Portia and Juliet, for instance), we are struck with the delightful sense of harmony in the midst of contrast, so that the idea of unity and simplicity of effect is produced in the midst of variety; but in Cleopatra it is the absence of unity and simplicity which strikes us; the impression is that of perpetual and irreconcilable contrast. The continual approximation of whatever is most opposite in character, in situation, in sentiment, would be fatiguing were it not so perfectly natural: the woman herself would be distracting if she were not so enchanting.

I have not the slightest doubt that Shakespeare's Cleopatra is the real historical Cleopatra—the "rare Egyptian"—individualized and placed before us. Her mental accomplishments, her unequalled grace, her woman's wit and woman's wiles, her irresistible allurements, her starts of irregular grandeur, her bursts of ungovernable temper, her vivacity of imagination, her petulant caprice, her fickleness and her falsehood, her tenderness and her truth, her childish susceptibility to flattery, her magnificent spirit, her royal pride, the gorgeous eastern colouring of the character; all these contradictory elements has Shakespeare seized, mingled them in their extremes, and fused them into one brilliant impersonation of classical elegance, Oriental voluptuousness, and gipsy sorcery. . . .

The character of Mark Antony, as delineated by Shakespeare, reminds me of the Farnese Hercules. There is an ostentatious display of power, an exaggerated grandeur, a colossal effect in the whole conception, sustained throughout in the pomp of the language, which seems, as it flows along, to resound with the clang of arms and the music of the revel. The coarseness and violence of the historic portrait are a little kept down; but every word which Antony utters is characteristic of the arrogant but magnanimous Roman, who, "with half the bulk o' the world played as he pleased," and was himself the sport of a host of mad (and bad) passions, and the slave of a woman.

Though Cleopatra talks of dying "after the high Roman fashion," she fears what she most desires, and cannot perform with simplicity what costs her such an effort. That extreme physical cowardice, which was so strong a trait in her historical character, which

led to the defeat of Actium, which made her delay the execution of a fatal resolve till she had "tried conclusions infinite of *easy* ways to die," Shakespeare has rendered with the finest possible effect, and in a manner which heightens instead of diminishing our respect and interest. Timid by nature she is courageous by the mere force of will, and she lashes herself up with high-sounding words into a kind of false daring. Her lively imagination suggests every incentive which can spur her on to the deed she has resolved, yet trembles to contemplate. She pictures to herself all the degradations which must attend her captivity: and let it be observed, that those which she anticipates are precisely such as a vain, luxurious, and haughty woman would especially dread, and which only true virtue and magnanimity could despise. Cleopatra could have endured the loss of freedom; but to be led in triumph through the streets of Rome is insufferable. She could stoop to Cæsar with dissembling courtesy, and meet duplicity with superior art; but "to be chastised" by the scornful or upbraiding glances of the injured Octavia—"rather a ditch in Egypt!"

She calls for her diadem, her robes of state, and attires herself as if "again for Cydnus, to meet Mark Antony." Coquette to the last, she must make Death proud to take her, and die "phœnix-like," as she had lived, with all the pomp of preparation—luxurious in her despair.

The death of Lucretia, of Portia, of Arria and others who died "after the high Roman fashion," is sublime according to the Pagan ideas of virtue, and yet none of them so powerfully affect the imagination as the catastrophe of Cleopatra. The idea of this frail, timid, wayward woman dying with heroism from the mere force of passion and will, takes us by surprise. The Attic elegance of her mind, the poetical imagination, the pride of beauty and royalty predominating to the last, and the sumptuous and picturesque accompaniments with which she surrounds herself in death, carry to its extreme height that effect of contrast which prevails through her life and character. No arts, no invention, could add to the real circumstances of Cleopatra's closing scene. Shakespeare has shown profound judgment and feeling in adhering closely to the classical authorities; and to say that the language and sentiments worthily fill up the outline, is the most magnificent praise that can be given. The magical play of fancy and the overpowering fascination of the character are kept up to the last; and when Cleopatra on applying the asp, silences the lamentations of her women—

"Peace, peace!  
Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,  
That sucks the nurse to sleep?"

these few words—the contrast between the tender beauty of the image and the horror of the situation—produce an effect more intensely mournful than all the ranting in the world. The generous devotion of her women adds the moral charm which alone was wanting:

and when Octavius hurries in too late to save his victim, and exclaims, when gazing on her—

“ She looks like sleep—  
As she would catch another Antony  
In her strong toil of grace,”

the image of her beauty and her irresistible arts, triumphant even in death, is at once brought before us, and one masterly and comprehensive stroke consummates this most wonderful, most dazzling delineation.

MRS. JAMESON—*Characteristics of Women* (ed. 1858) pp., 121—158.

### SHAKESPEARE'S USE OF PLUTARCH IN “ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.”

IN *Antony and Cleopatra*, and in the adaptation of the story, as it lay before him in the pages of Plutarch, to the needs of his art, Shakespeare had a much harder problem to solve than any which *Julius Caesar* offered; and his solution of this problem, when we realize what it was, may well fill us with unbounded admiration. The Brutus of Plutarch was a character ready made to his hands. Here and there a melancholy grace, a touch of gentleness and of beauty, has been added by him, but hardly more than this; while if in Cassius the lines are deepened and the character more sharply delineated, this is all that Shakespeare has done, even as it was all that was needed. But it was otherwise with Antony. The Antony of history, of Plutarch himself, would have been no subject for poetry. Splendidly endowed by nature as he was, it would yet have been impossible to claim or create a sympathy for one so cruel, dyed so deeply in the noblest blood of Rome; the wholesale plunderer of peaceful cities and provinces that he might squander their spoils on the vilest ministers of his pleasures; himself the origin of orgies so shameless, sunken in such a mire of sin: in whom met the ugliest features, and what one would have counted beforehand as the irreconcilable contradictions of an Oriental despot and a Roman gladiator. And yet, transformed, we may say transfigured, by that marvellous touch, the Antony of Shakespeare, if not the veritable Antony of history, has not so broken with him as not to be recognizable still.

The play, starting from a late period of Antony's career, enables Shakespeare to leave wholly out of sight, and this with no violation of historic truth, much in the life of the triumvir which was wickedest and worst. For the rest what was coarse is refined, what would take no colour of goodness is ignored, what had any fair side on which it could be shown is shown on that side alone. He appears from the first as not himself, but as under the spells of that potent Eastern enchantress who had once held by these spells

a Cæsar himself. There are followers who cleave to him in his lowest estate, even as there are fitful gleams and glimpses of generosity about him which explain this fidelity of theirs ; and when at the last we behold him standing amid the wreck of fortunes and the waste of gifts, all wrecked and wasted by himself, penetrated through and through with the infinite shame and sadness of such a close to such a life, the whole range of poetry offers no more tragical figure than he is, few that arouse a deeper pity ; while yet, ideal as this Antony of Shakespeare is, he is connected by innumerable subtle bands and finest touches with the real historical Antony, at once another and the same.

I showed, before leaving *Julius Cæsar*, how much Shakespeare could on occasion make of a comparatively little. It may be well, before parting from these plays, to bring before you one other passage, and this among the noblest which he has, where he counts any such effort superfluous, where he does no more than put into verse what he finds ready prepared to his hand ; so recognizes the finished completeness of Plutarch's narrative, that he makes no attempt to add anything to it, or to take anything from it. All are familiar with the death of Cleopatra, the setting of that "eastern star," as Shakespeare calls her ; Augustus Cæsar, whose suspicions of her intention to rob him of the chief trophy of his victory have been aroused too late, seeking in vain to balk her of her purpose. These last things of her life are thus told by Plutarch :—

"Her death was very sudden, for those whom Cæsar sent unto her ran hither in all haste possible, and found the soldiers standing at the gate, mistrusting nothing nor understanding of her death. But when they had opened the doors, they found Cleopatra stark dead, laid upon a bed of gold, attired and arrayed in her royal robes, and one of her two women, which was called Iras, dead at her feet ; and her other woman (called Charmion) half dead and trembling, trimming the diadem which Cleopatra wore upon her head. One of the soldiers seeing her, angrily said unto her : 'Is that well done, Charmion?' 'Very well,' said she again, 'and meet for a princess descended from the race of so many noble kings :' she said no more, but fell down dead hard by the bed."

It would not be easy to mend this, the details of which may very well have been derived from the *Memoirs* of Cleopatra's physician, Olympus ; of which Plutarch speaks, and which in all likelihood he used ; and Shakespeare is too consummate an artist to attempt to mend it. He is satisfied with absorbing into his verse all the grandeur of this passage—not omitting the angry expostulation of the Roman soldier,

"Charmian, is this well done?"

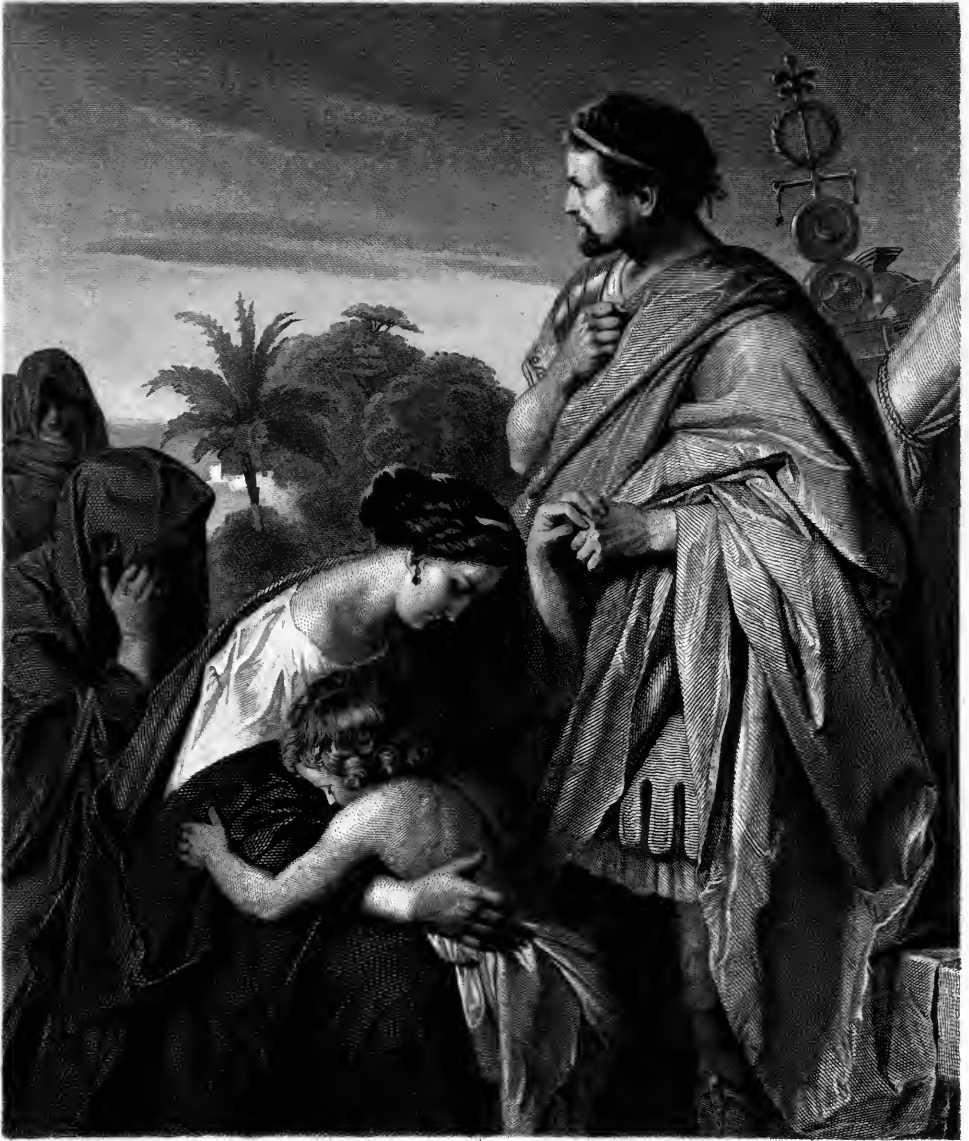
and the high-hearted answer of the Egyptian lady in waiting, "noble Charmian" her mistress had called her but a little while before, and she does not belie her name—

"It is well done, and fitting for a princess.  
Descended of so many royal kings ;"

but he does not attempt to add anything of his own, as indeed there was no room for any such addition.

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH—*Plutarch : his Life, his Lives and his Morals*, pp. 55—59.





H. Adams del.

J. B. Bauer sc.

Coriolanus — Coriolanus.



## CORIOLANUS.

## ACT V.

SCENE III. *The Tent of CORIOLANUS.*

CORIOLANUS, AUFIDIUS, and others.

\* \* \* \*

*Enter, in mourning habits, VIRGILIA, VOLUMNIA, leading young MARCIUS, VALERIA, and Attendants.*

*Coriolanus.* My wife comes foremost ; then the honour'd mould

Wherein this trunk was framed, and in her hand The grandchild to her blood. But, out, affection ! All bond and privilege of nature, break !

Let it be virtuous to be obstinate.

What is that curt'sy worth ? or those doves' eyes,

Which can make gods forsworn ? I melt, and am not

Of stronger earth than others. My mother bows :

As if Olympus to a molehill should

In supplication nod : and my young boy

Hath an aspect of intercession, which Great nature cries ' Deny not.' Let the Volsces Plough Rome, and harrow Italy : I'll never Be such a gosling to obey instinct, but stand, As if a man were author of himself And knew no other kin.

*Vir.* My lord and husband !

*Cor.* These eyes are not the same I wore in Rome

*Vir.* The sorrow that delivers us thus changed Makes you think so.

*Cor.* Like a dull actor now,

I have forgot my part, and I am out,

Even to a full disgrace. Best of my flesh,

Forgive my tyranny ; but do not say

For that ' Forgive our Romans.' O, a kiss

Long as my exile, sweet as my revenge !

Now, by the jealous queen of heaven, that kiss

I carried from thee, dear ; and my true lip

Hath virgin'd it e'er since. You gods ! I prate,

And the most noble mother of the world

Leave unsaluted : sink, my knee, i' the earth ;

[*Kneels.*

Of thy deep duty more impression show

Than that of common sons.

## "CORIOLANUS."

HAZLITT charges that in this play the Poet shows a strong leaning to the side of Patrician arrogance and pride against the rights and feelings of the people. Therewithal he expatiates at large to make out how much more of poetry there is in the high treadings of aristocratic insolence than in the modest walking of Plebeian humility. . . . There is, I believe, no ground for such a charge as Hazlitt's in this case. On the contrary, the play, I think, may be justly cited as a pattern of dramatic even-handedness. . . . I will even venture to say that the people as here represented have in them a preponderance of the amiable and the good, while in the hero there is a clear preponderance of the reverse. . . . He, in his towering arrogance, would have his own will stand as an ultimate law both for himself and for them ; but they are far from claiming any such monstrous prerogative over him ; it is his pride to act towards them as if they had no business to exist but for the pleasure of such as he is ; while they are merely acting on the principle that their own welfare and happiness should enter into the purpose of their living : he would stand "as if a man were author of himself, and knew no other kin," and would

have them live entirely for his ends ; whereas they insist on living partly for themselves ; and all they claim is, that he shall own his nature to be kindred with theirs, and treat them as having the same human heart which beats in him. . . .

. . . . The remarks already made infer pride to be the backbone of the hero's character ; this too a pride standing partly indeed on class and family grounds, but still more on such as are purely individual or personal. And such is the idea of the man which Shakespeare found in Plutarch, who prefaces his narrative with the following calm and weighty sentences touching the subject :—

“While the force and vigour of his soul, and a persevering constancy in all he undertook, led him successfully into many noble achievements, yet, on the other side, by indulging the vehemence of his passion, and through an obstinate reluctance to yield or accommodate his humours and sentiments to those of people about him, he rendered himself incapable of acting and associating with others. Those who saw with admiration how proof his nature was against all the softness of pleasure, the hardships of service, and the allurements of gain, while allowing to that universal firmness of his the respective names of temperance, fortitude, and justice, yet, in the life of the citizen and the statesman, could not choose but be disgusted at the severity and ruggedness of his deportment, and with his overbearing, haughty, and imperious temper. Education and study, and the favours of the Muses, confer no greater benefit on those that seek them than those humanizing and civilizing lessons which teach our natural qualities to submit to the limitations prescribed by reason, and to avoid the wildness of extremes.”

In accordance with what is here said, Shakespeare not only makes pride the hero's master principle, but also sets forth his pride as being rendered altogether inflammable and uncontrollable by passion ; insomuch that, if a spark of provocation is struck into the latter, the former instantly flames up beyond measure, and sweeps away all the regards of prudence, of decorum, and even of common sense. It is therefore strictly characteristic of the man, that an unexpected word of reproach stings him to the quick : the instant it touches his ear, he explodes like a rocket. It is on this that the wily Tribunes work, plying their craft, and watching the time to sting him into some fatal provocation of popular resentment. Hence, also, the Poet, with great judgment, and without any hint from the history, makes Aufidius, when the time is ripe for firing off the conspiracy against his life, touch him into an ecstasy of passionate rage by spitting the term *boy* at him. Now this very pride, if duly guarded by the strengths of reason and self-respect, would have caused him, from the utter unfitness of such an epithet, to answer it with calm and silent scorn ; but he resents it in proportion as it strikes wide of him, and makes its very absurdity the cause of its power over him. . . .

Coriolanus, however, is not altogether “himself, his world, and his own god :” his will no doubt is to be so, and this is perhaps the most constant force in him ; but he has other and better forces, which often rise against his egotism, and sometimes prevail over it, and at last carry the victory clean away from it. His character indeed is not a little mixed : and all its parts, good and bad, are fashioned on so large a scale as to yield

matter enough for working out a strong case either way, according as the observer's mind is set to a course of all blame or all praise ; while at the same time the several lines so bold and pronounced, that it is not easy for one to keep clear of all extremes, and so to take the impression of a given side as to fit the subject all round. Nor is his pride, with all its anti-social harshness, destitute of amiable and engaging features. There are some points of nobleness and magnanimity about it: the various regards of rank, family, country, talents and courage enter into its composition, causing it to partake of the general greatness of his character ; and as it grows partly by what he derives from and shares with others, as well as by what is peculiar to himself, so it involves much of the spirit that commonly issues in great virtues as well as great faults.

. . . . The man, it must be confessed, is gloriously proud of his mother: in fact, his pride in her is only less than his pride of personal greatness and his pride of self. This is the one point indeed where his pride relaxes its anti-social stiffness, and ceases to be individual and exclusive. And it is very considerable that he appears noblest and strongest just when his nature outwrestles his purpose, and when his pride breaks down under the weight of filial reverence and duty. Shakespeare had it before him in Plutarch, that "the only thing which caused him to love honour was the delight his mother had of him ;" for "nothing made him so happy as that she might always see him return with a crown upon his head, and still embrace him, with tears running down her cheeks for joy." And so, as represented in the drama, he can outface the rest of the world, but his mother, with his household treasures at her side, is too much for him: when he has conquered all the armies of his country, and has the State itself at his feet, her eloquence, her strength of soul and patriotic devotion conquer him. In his rapture of self-will, he aspires to act the god, and thinks to stifle the heart's instincts, and to rise above the natural emotions ; and he stands most redeemed to our judgment and our sense of manliness, when at last a diviner power than will masters him, and the sacred regards of home triumph over his self-sufficiency, and his arrogance succumbs to the touch of domestic awe and tenderness, and he frankly yields himself human. Where have we another such an instance of pride struggling with affection, and of an iron will subdued by the spontaneous forces of the human breast, as when he sees the embassy of women approaching?—

“ My wife comes foremost ; then the honour'd mould  
Wherein this trunk was fram'd, and in her hand  
The grandchild to her blood.—But, out affection !  
All bond and privilege of nature, break !  
Let it be virtuous to be obstinate.—  
What is that curtsy worth ? or those doves' eyes,  
Which can make gods forsworn ?—I melt, and am not

Of stronger earth than others.—My mother bows ;  
 As if Olympus to a molehill should  
 In supplication nod ; and my young boy  
 Hath an aspect of intercession, which  
 Great Nature cries, *Deny not.*"

I know not where to look for a grander picture than we have in the same scene afterwards, when the conqueror's haughtiness and parricidal hardness gradually limber and soften, and at length fall clean away, at the voice of maternal intercession. Such a mingling of austerity and tenderness is met with nowhere else in Shakespeare's poetry. And it is to be noted that the mother's triumph does not seem to be fully consummated, till her great woman's heart stiffens up with something of the son's pride, and she turns away with an air of defiance :—

" Come, let us go :  
 This fellow had a Volscian to his mother ;  
 His wife is in Corioli, and this child  
 Like him by chance."

That she can be like him in pride thaws down that temper somewhat in him, and disposes him to be like her in other points. . . . Nor is the mother's the only influence at work to break the hero out of his unnatural purpose and recall him to better thoughts. She indeed does nearly all the speaking ; but her speech is powerfully reinforced by the presence and aspect of others. Little is said of Virgilia, and still less is said by her ; but that little is so managed as to infer a great deal. A very gentle, retiring, undemonstrative person, she has withal much quiet firmness, and even a dash of something very like obstinacy, in her disposition. Her power touches the centre of her husband's heart ; and it does this the better for being the power of delicacy and sweetness ; a power the more effective with him, that it is so utterly unlike his own. So, when he returns from the war all covered with glory, her silent tears of joy are to him a sweeter tribute than the loud applause of all the rest : he hails her as "my gracious silence," and plays out his earnest tenderness in the question, "Wouldst thou have laugh'd had I come coffin'd home, that weep'st to see me triumph?" How deeply her still forces have stolen into his being is charmingly evinced in what he says to her when she comes with her speechless supplication to second the voice of maternal remonstrance :—

" Best of my flesh,  
 Forgive my tyranny ; but do not say  
 For that, *Forgive our Romans.* O, a kiss  
 Long as my exile, sweet as my revenge !

Now, by the jealous Queen of Heaven, that kiss  
I carried from thee, dear, and my true lip  
Hath virgin'd it e'er since."

Here he finds his entire household in something more powerful than arms to resist him; the mother, the wife, the child, all are shaming his parricidal revenge by standing true to their fatherland against the son, the husband, and the father; and the words just quoted show that the might of the silent mourner is even more penetrating than that of the eloquent pleader. The two women have hearts stronger in love than in pride; and the prime object of that love is the old Rome of their fathers: both the mother and the wife are steadfastly resolved that, if he march any further against that object, it shall be over their bodies; while the boy's Roman spirit flashes up in the strange declaration, "'A shall not tread on me; I'll run away till I am bigger, then I'll fight.'" The hideous unnaturalness of his course is brought fully home to him at thus seeing that the very childhood of his own flesh and blood is instinctively bent on resisting him, and will sooner disown his kindred and make war upon him than give way to his fury against their common nurse. Therewithal, in the presence of "the noble sister of Publicola, the Moon of Rome," he sees how all that is most illustrious in the same proud Patrician stock on which he so much prides himself, even those who were most hurt in his banishment will rather unite with his banishers in imploring the gods against him than surrender their country to his revenge. And I am apt to think that what most took Shakespeare in his ancient tale of Roman patriotism was, that while, to the minds of those high-souled men and women, it was a great thing to be Patricians, to be Romans was a much greater.

H. N. HUDSON.—*Shakespeare, his Life, Art, and Characters*, Vol. II. pp. 469—482.

### SHAKESPEARE'S POLITICAL VIEWS.

CAN it be made out what were Shakespeare's political views? We think it certainly can, and that without difficulty. From the English historical plays, it distinctly appears that he accepted, like everybody then, the Constitution of his country. His lot was not cast in an age of political controversy, nor of reform. What was, was from of old. The Wars of the Roses had made it very evident how much room there was for the evils incident to an hereditary monarchy, for instance, those of a controverted succession, and the evils incident to an aristocracy, as want of public spirit and audacious selfishness, to arise and continue within the realm of England. Yet they had not repelled, and had barely disconcerted our conservative ancestors. They had not become Jacobins; they did not concur—and history, except in Shakespeare, hardly does justice to them—in Jack Cade's notion, that the laws should come out of his mouth, or that the commonwealth was to be reformed by interlocutors in this scene.

“*Geo.* I tell thee, Jack Cade, the clothier means to dress the commonwealth, and turn it, and set a new nap on it.

*John.* So he had need, for, 'tis very threadbare. Well, I say it was never a merry world in England since gentlemen came up.

*Geo.* O miserable age! Virtue is not regarded in handicraftsmen.

*John.* The nobility think scorn to go in leathern aprons.

*Geo.* Nay, more: the King's council are no true workmen.

*John.* True; and yet it is said, Labour in thy vocation; which is as much as to say, as let the magistrates be labouring men, and therefore we should be magistrates.

*Geo.* Thou hast hit it, for there is no better sign of a brave mind than a hard hand.

*John.* I see them! I see them!”

The English people did see them, and know them, and therefore have rejected them. An audience which, *bonâ fide*, entered into the merit of this scene, would never believe in everybody's suffrage. They would know that there is such a thing as nonsense, and when a man has once attained to that deep conception, you may be sure of him ever after. And though it would be absurd to say that Shakespeare originated this idea, or that the disbelief in simple democracy is owing to his teaching or suggestions, yet it may, nevertheless, be truly said that he shared in the peculiar knowledge of men,—and also possessed the peculiar constitution of mind—which engender this effect. The author of *Coriolanus* never believed in a mob, and did something towards preventing anybody else from doing so. But this political idea was not exactly the strongest in Shakespeare's mind. We think he had two others stronger, or as strong. First, the feeling of loyalty to the ancient polity of this country—not because it was good, but because it existed. In his time, people no more thought of the origin of the monarchy than they did of the origin of the Mendip Hills. The one had always been there, and so had the other. God (such was the common notion) had made both, and one as much as the other. Everywhere, in that age, the common modes of political speech assumed the existence of certain utterly national institutions, and would have been worthless and nonsensical except on that assumption. This national habit appears as it ought to appear in our national dramatist. A great divine tells us that the Thirty-nine Articles are “forms of thought;” inevitable conditions of the religious understanding; in politics, “kings, lords, and commons” are, no doubt, “forms of thought” to the great majority of Englishmen; in these they live, and beyond these they never move. You can't reason on the removal (such is the notion) of the English Channel, nor St. George's Channel, nor can you of the English Constitution in like manner. It is to most of us, and to the happiest of us, a thing immutable, and such, no doubt, it was to Shakespeare, which, if any one would have proved, let him refer at random to any page of the historical English plays.

The second peculiar tenet which we ascribe to his political creed is a disbelief in the middle classes. We fear he had no opinion of traders. In this age, we know, it is held

that the keeping of a shop is equivalent to a political education. Occasionally in country villages, where the trader sells everything, he is thought to know nothing, and has no vote; but in a town, where he is a householder (as, indeed, he is in the country), and sells only one thing—there we assume that he knows everything. And this assumption is in the opinion of some observers confirmed by the fact. Sir Walter Scott used to relate, that when, after a trip to London, he returned to Tweedside, he always found the people in that district knew more of politics than the Cabinet. And so it is with the mercantile community in modern times. If you are a Chancellor of the Exchequer, it is possible that you may be acquainted with finance; but if you sell figs it is certain that you will. Now we nowhere find this laid down in Shakespeare. On the contrary, you will generally find that when a "citizen" is mentioned, he generally does or says something absurd. Shakespeare had a clear perception that it is possible to bribe a class as well as an individual, and that personal obscurity is but an insecure guarantee for political disinterestedness:—

"Moreover, he hath left you all his walks,  
His private arbours and new-planted orchards  
On this side Tyber; he hath left them you,  
And to your heirs for ever: common pleasures,  
To walk abroad and recreate yourselves.  
Here was a Cæsar! when comes such another?"

He everywhere speaks in praise of a tempered and ordered and qualified polity, in which the pecuniary classes have a certain influence, but no more, and shows in every page a keen sensibility to the large views and high-souled energies, the gentle refinements and disinterested desires, in which those classes are likely to be especially deficient. He is particularly the poet of personal nobility, though throughout his writings there is a sense of freedom, just as Milton is the poet of freedom, though with an underlying reference to personal nobility; indeed, we might well expect our two poets to combine the appreciation of a rude and generous liberty with that of a delicate and refined nobleness, since it is the union of these two elements that characterizes our society and their experience.

WALTER BAGEHOT.—*Estimates of some Englishmen and Scotchmen*  
(1858), pp. 257—260.

## HENRY VIII.

## ACT I.

SCENE IV. *The Presence Chamber in York Place.*

*Hautboys. Enter the KING and others, as masquers, habited like shepherds, ushered by the LORD CHAMBERLAIN. They pass directly before the CARDINAL, and gracefully salute him.*

*Wolsey.* A noble company ! What are their pleasures ?

*Chamberlain.* Because they speak no English, thus they pray'd

To tell your grace, that, having heard by fame  
Of this so noble and so fair assembly  
This night to meet here, they could do no less,  
Out of the great respect they bear to beauty,  
But leave their flocks ; and, under your fair  
conduct,

Crave leave to view these ladies and entreat  
An hour of revels with 'em.

*Wol.* Say, lord chamberlain,  
That they have done my poor house grace ; for  
which I pay 'em

A thousand thanks, and pray 'em take their  
pleasures.

[*They choose Ladies for the dance. The KING chooses ANNE BULLEN.*

*King.* The fairest hand I ever touch'd ! O  
beauty,  
Till now I never knew thee !

[*Music. Dance.*

*Wol.* My lord !

*Cham.* Your grace ?

*Wol.* Pray tell 'em thus much from me.  
There should be one amongst 'em, by his person,  
More worthy this place than myself ; to whom,  
If I but knew him, with my love and duty  
I would surrender it.

*Chan.* I will, my lord.

[*Whispers the masquers.*

*Wol.* What say they ?

*Cham.* Such a one, they all confess,  
There is indeed : which they would have your  
grace

Find out, and he will take it.

*Wol.* Let me see, then.

By all your good leaves, gentlemen, here I'll  
make

My royal choice.

*King.* Ye have found him, cardinal :

[*Unmasking.*

You hold a fair assembly ; you do well, lord :  
You are a churchman, or, I'll tell you cardinal,  
I should judge now unhappily.

*Wol.* I am glad

Your grace is grown so pleasant.

*King.* My lord chamberlain,  
Prithee, come hither : what fair lady's that ?

*Cham.* An't please your grace, Sir Thomas  
Bullen's daughter,—

The Viscount Rochford,—one of her highness'  
women.

*King.* By heaven, she is a dainty one. Sweet-  
heart,

I were unmannerly, to take you out,  
And not to kiss you. A health, gentlemen !  
Let it go round.

*Wol.* Sir Thomas Lovell, is the banquet ready  
I' the privy chamber ?

*Lov.* Yes, my lord.

*Wol.* Your grace,

I fear, with dancing is a little heated.

*King.* I fear too much.

*Wol.* There's fresher air, my lord,  
In the next chamber.

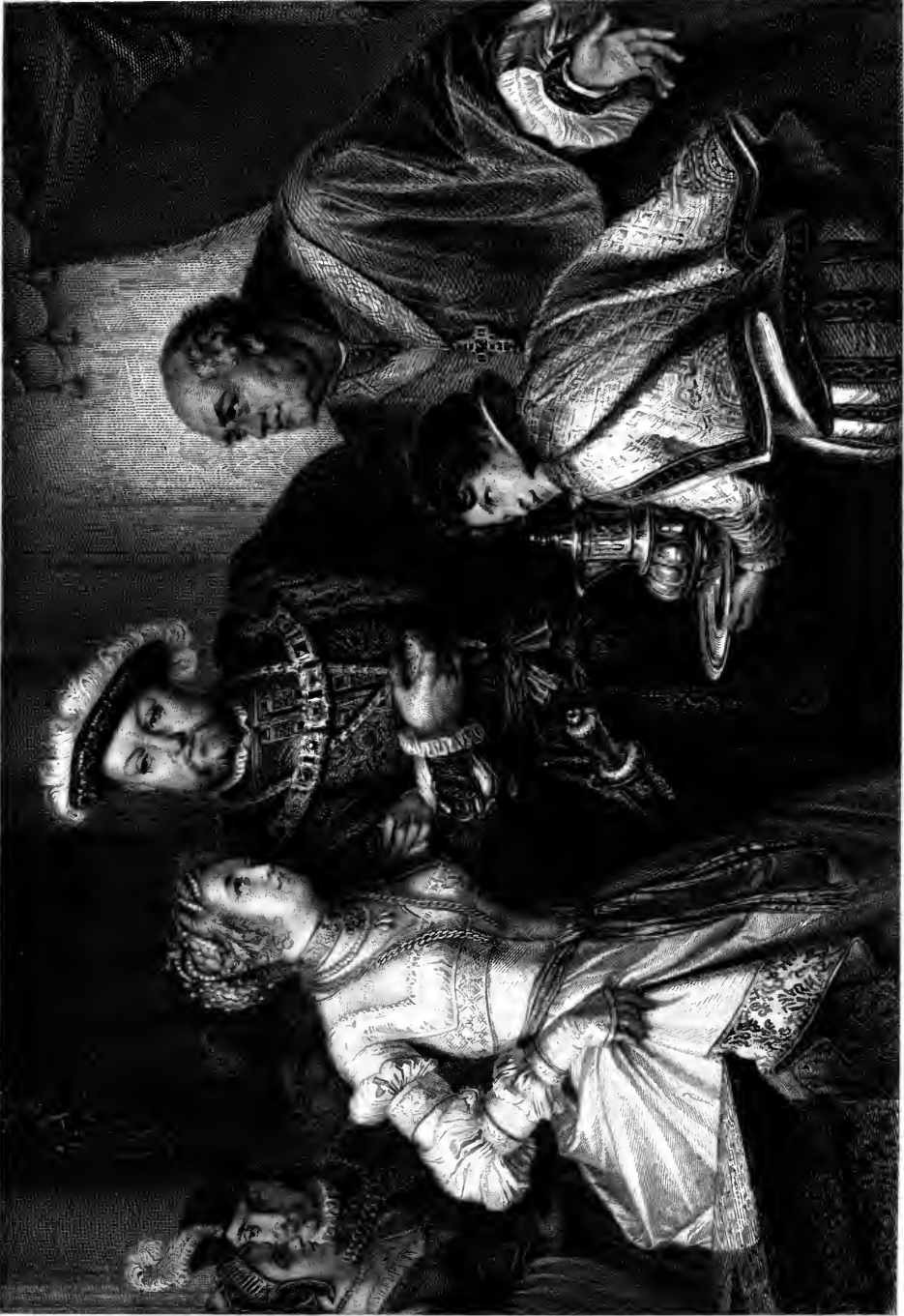
*King.* Lead in your ladies, every one : sweet  
partner,

I must not yet forsake you : let's be merry :  
Good my lord cardinal, I have half a dozen  
healths

To drink to these fair ladies, and a measure  
To lead 'em once again ; and then let's dream  
Who's best in favour. Let the music knock it.

[*Exeunt with trumpets.*





Henry · Harrieh III. King Henry VIII



SINGULARITY OF THE PLAY OF "HENRY VIII." EXPLAINED  
BY THE FACT OF DOUBLE AUTHORSHIP.

SEVERAL of our most distinguished critics have incidentally betrayed a consciousness that there is something peculiar either in the execution, or the structure, or the general design of the play. . . . Dr. Johnson observes that the genius of Shakespeare comes in and goes out with Katharine, and that the rest of the play might be easily conceived and easily written,—a fact, if it be a fact, so remarkable as to call for explanation. Coleridge, in one of his attempts to classify Shakespeare's plays (1802) distinguished *Henry VIII.* as *gelegenhetsgedicht*; in another (1819) as a "sort of historical masque or show-play;" thereby betraying a consciousness that there was something singular and exceptional about it.<sup>1</sup> . . . And leaving the critics, I might probably appeal to the individual consciousness of each reader, and ask him whether he has not always felt that, in spite of some great scenes which have made actors and actresses famous, and many beautiful speeches which adorn our books of extracts (and which, by the way, lose little or nothing by separation from their context, a most rare thing in Shakespeare), the effect of this play, *as a whole*, is weak and disappointing. The truth is that the interest instead of rising towards the end, falls away utterly, and leaves us in the last act among persons whom we scarcely know, and events for which we do not care. The strongest sympathies which have been awakened in us run opposite to the course of the action. Our sympathy is for the grief and goodness of Queen Katharine, while the course of the action requires us to entertain as a theme of joy and compensatory satisfaction the coronation of Anne Bullen and the birth of her daughter; which are in fact a part of Katharine's injury, and amount to little less than the ultimate triumph of wrong. For throughout the play the King's cause is not only felt by us, but represented to us, as a bad one. We *hear*, indeed, of conscientious scruples as to the legality of his first marriage; but we are not made, nor indeed asked, to believe that they are sincere, or to recognize in his new marriage either the hand of Providence or the consummation of any worthy object, or the victory of any of those more common frailties of humanity with which we can sympathize. The mere caprice of passion drives the King into the commission of what seems a great iniquity; our compassion for the victim of it is elaborately excited; no attempt is made to awaken any counter-sympathy for *him*; yet

<sup>1</sup> Hertzberg describes the play as "a chronicle-history with three and a half catastrophes, varied by a marriage and a coronation pageant, ending abruptly with the baptism of a child, and in which are combined the elements of a satirical drama with a prophetic ecstasy, and all this loosely con-

ected by the nominal hero (*sit venia verbo*) whom no poet in heaven or earth could ever have formed into a tragic character."—Quoted in Karl Elze's article on Henry VIII., *Essays on Shakespeare* (1874), pp. 165-66.

his passion has its way, and is crowned with all felicity, present and to come. The effect is much like that which would have been produced by *The Winter's Tale* if Hermione had died in the fourth act in consequence of the jealous tyranny of Leontes, and the play had ended with the coronation of a new queen, and the christening of a new heir, no period of remorse intervening. It is as if Nathan's rebuke to David had ended not with the doom of death to the child just born, but with a prophetic promise of the felicities of Solomon.

This main defect is sufficient of itself to mar the effect of the play as a whole. But there is another, which though less vital is not less unaccountable. The greater part of the fifth act, in which the interest ought to be gathering to a head, is occupied with matters in which we have not been prepared to take any interest by what went before, and on which no interest is reflected by what comes after. The scenes in the gallery and council-chamber, though full of life and vigour, and, in point of execution, not unworthy of Shakespeare, are utterly irrelevant to the business of the play; for what have we to do with the quarrel between Gardiner and Cranmer? Nothing in the play is explained by it, nothing depends upon it. . . .

I know no other play in Shakespeare which is chargeable with a fault like this, none in which the moral sympathy of the spectator is not carried along with the main current of action to the end. In all the historical tragedies a providence may be seen presiding over the development of events, as just and relentless as the fate in a Greek tragedy. Even in *Henry IV.*, where the comic element predominates, we are never allowed to exult in the success of the wrong-doer, or to forget the penalties which are due to guilt. And if it be true that in the romantic comedies our moral sense does sometimes suffer a passing shock, it is never owing to an error in the general design, but always to some incongruous circumstance in the original story which has lain in the way, and not been entirely got rid of, and which after all offends us rather as an incident improbable in itself than as one for which our sympathy is unjustly demanded. The singularity of *Henry VIII.* is that, while four-fifths of the play are occupied in matters which are to make us incapable of mirth, . . . the remaining fifth is devoted to joy and triumph, and ends with universal festivity.

[The writer's attention having been turned to the peculiarity of the versification,—wholly unlike that of Shakespeare,—of certain portions of *Henry VIII.*, he determined to read the play through with an eye to the structure of the verse, and see whether any solution of the mystery would present itself. "The result of my examination," he writes, "was a clear conviction that at least two different hands had been employed in the composition of *Henry VIII.*, if not three; and that they had worked, not together, but alternately upon distinct portions of it." A peculiarity of the verse of the non-Shakespearian portions,—the frequency of one or more redundant syllables at the end of the line,—

pointed to Fletcher as the author of these portions. With this view of the authorship of *Henry VIII.* falls in the fact that at the close of Shakespeare's career as a dramatist,—precisely the time when *Henry VIII.* was first produced,—another play, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, was written conjointly by the two authors, Shakespeare and Fletcher. Applying numerically the test of the redundant syllable to distinguish Fletcher's part in *Henry VIII.* from that of Shakespeare, the results brought out by this verse-test were identical with those indicated by the literary feeling of the critic at work in its various conscious and unconscious ways. Since Mr. Spedding wrote, a number of distinct lines of evidence similar to that which he had pursued have concurred in leading to the same conclusion. It will interest the reader to compare the portions ascribed almost with certainty to the two authors. *Shakespeare's portion*: Act I. Scene 1. 2; Act II. Scene 3. 4; Act III. Scene 2 (as far as the exit of King Henry). Act V. Scene 1 Shakespeare (altered). *Fletcher's portion*: the remainder of the play.]

Assuming then that *Henry VIII.* was written partly by Shakespeare, partly by Fletcher, with the assistance probably of some third hand, it becomes a curious question upon what plan their joint labours were conducted. It was not unusual in those days, when a play was wanted in a hurry, to set two or three or even four hands at work upon it; and the occasion of the Princess Elizabeth's marriage (February 1612-13) may very likely have suggested the production of a play representing the marriage of Henry VIII. and Anne Bullen. Such an occasion would sufficiently account for the determination to treat the subject not tragically; the necessity for producing it immediately might lead to the employment of several hands; and thence would follow inequality of workmanship, and imperfect adaptation of the several parts to each other. But this would not explain the incoherency and inconsistency of the main design. . . . I should . . . conjecture that Shakespeare had conceived the idea of a great historical drama on the subject of Henry VIII., which would have included the divorce of Katharine, the fall of Wolsey, the rise of Cranmer, the coronation of Anne Bullen, and the final separation of the English from the Romish Church, which, being the one great historical event of the reign, would naturally be chosen as the focus of poetic interest; that he had proceeded in the execution of this idea as far perhaps as the third Act, which might have included the establishment of Cranmer in the seat of highest ecclesiastical authority (the council-chamber scene in the fifth being designed as an introduction to that); when, finding that his fellows of the Globe were in distress for a new play to honour the marriage of the Lady Elizabeth, he thought that his half-finished work might help them, and accordingly handed them his manuscript to make what they could of it; that they put it into the hands of Fletcher (already in high repute as a popular and expeditious playwright), who finding the original design not very suitable to the occasion, and utterly beyond his capacity, expanded the three acts into five, by interspersing scenes of show

and magnificence, and passages of description, and long poetical conversations, in which his strength lay ; dropped all allusion to the great ecclesiastical revolution, which he could not manage and for which he had no materials supplied him ; converted what should have been the middle into the end ; and so turned out a splendid " historical masque, or show-play," which was no doubt very popular then, as it has been ever since.

JAMES SPEDDING.—*On the Several Parts of Shakespeare and Fletcher in the Play of Henry VIII: The Gentleman's Magazine*, Aug. 1850 ; Reprinted in *Transactions of the New Shakspeare Society*, 1874.

#### CHARACTER OF WOLSEY.

WOLSEY is indeed a superb delineation, strong, subtle, comprehensive and profound. All the way from his magnificent arrogance at the start to his penetrating and persuasive wisdom on quitting the scene, the space is rich with deep and telling lines of character. The corrupting influences of place and power have stimulated the worsè elements of his nature into an usurped predominance : pride, ambition, duplicity, insolence, vindictiveness, a passion for intriguing and circumventing arts, a wilful and elaborate stifling of conscience and pity, confidence in his potency of speech making him reckless of truth and contemptuous of simplicity and purity, these are the faults, all of gigantic stature, that have got possession of him. When the reverse, so sudden and decisive, overtakes him, its first effect is to render him more truthful. In the great scene, iii. 2, where Norfolk, Suffolk, and Surrey so remorselessly hunt him down with charges and reproaches, his conscience is quickly stung into resurgence ; with clear eye he begins to see in their malice and their ill-mannered exultation at his fall, a reflection of his own moral features, and with keen pangs of remorse he forthwith goes to searching and hating and despising in himself the things that show so hateful and so mean in his enemies ; and their envenomed taunts have the effect rather of composing his mind than of irritating it. To be sure, he at first stings back again ; but in his upworkings of anger his long dormant honesty is soon awakened, and this presently calms him.

His repentance, withal, is hearty and genuine, and not a mere exercise in self-cozenage, or a fit of self-commiseration : as he takes all his healthy vigour and clearness of understanding into the process, so he is carried through a real renovation of the heart and rejuvenescence of the soul ; his former sensibility of principle, his early faith in truth and right, which had been drugged to sleep with the high wines of state and pomp, revive, and with the solid sense and refreshment of having triumphed over his faults and put down

his baser self, his self-respect returns ; and he now feels himself stronger with the world against him than he had been with the world at his beck.

H. N. HUDSON.—*Shakespeare, his Life, Art and Characters* (ed. 1872),  
Vol. II. pp. 186—87.

### CHARACTER OF HENRY VIII.

BUT, no doubt, the finest dramatic study in *King Henry VIII.* is the study of the great Tudor himself, who, as Mr. Tennyson makes Lord Howard tell Queen Mary,—

“ Was a man  
Of such colossal kinghood, yet so courteous,  
Except when wroth, you scarce could meet his eye  
And hold your own ; and were he wroth indeed  
You held it less or not at all. I say,  
Your father had a will that beat men down ;  
Your father had a brain that beat men down.”

Such a will and such a brain are delineated for us with infinite vivacity and force in *King Henry VIII.* It is not difficult to see that Shakespeare had no love for Henry VIII. Indeed, many writers have maintained that the play could not have been produced till after Elizabeth's death, with such hits as it parades at Henry's perpetual “ ha ! ” such a satire as it contains on his passions,—for instance, in the first scene in which he falls in love with Anne Bullen, just after he has told Katharine “ you have half our power ; ”—and again, with that touch of hypocrisy,—

“ But conscience, conscience,  
Oh ! 'tis a tender place, and I must leave her,”

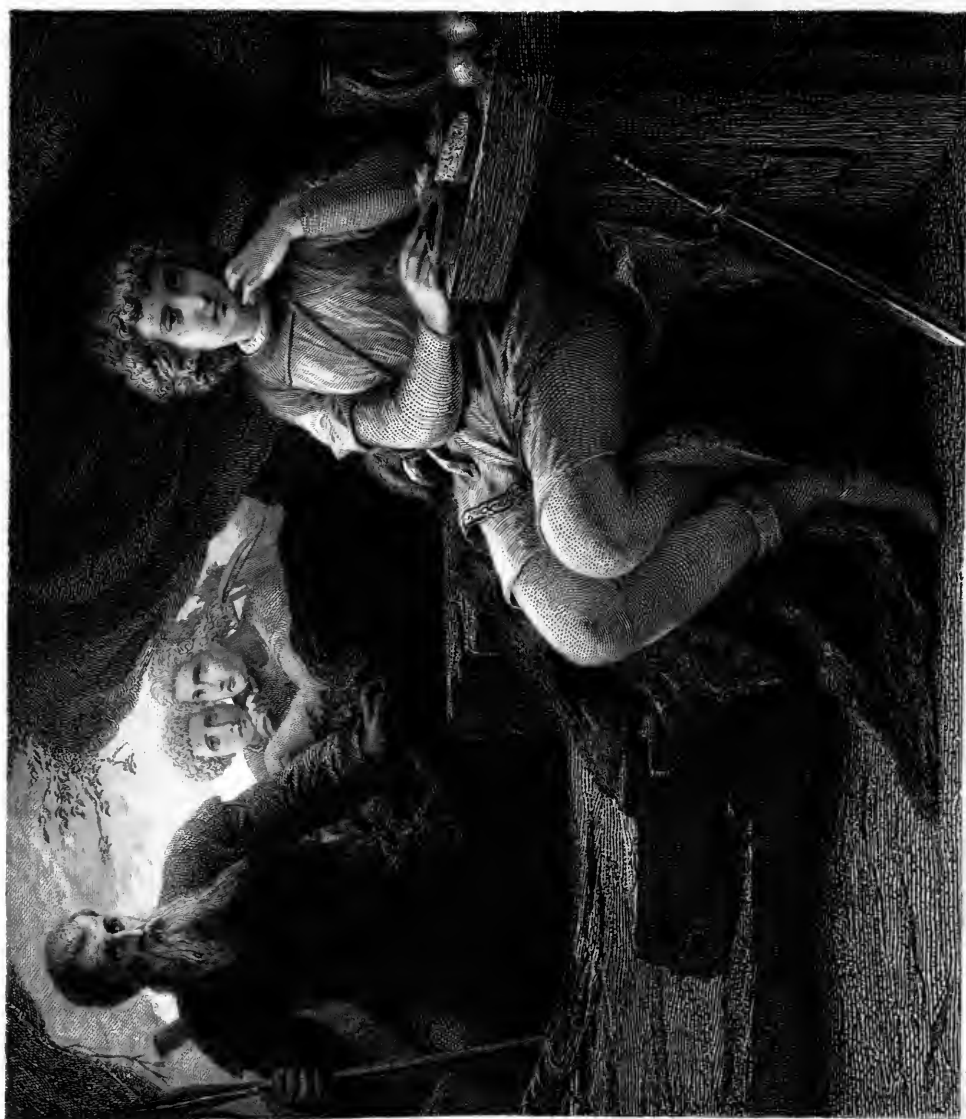
delivered at the very moment when he is burning with rage at the delays of the Cardinals and resolving to work through Cranmer to a hastier divorce. But in spite of Shakespeare's visible contempt for Henry's moral nature, he never for a moment forgets to let us see the almost magic fascination of the King for his servants, both while he uses them and after he has thrown them over. He shows us Buckingham going to the block an innocent man betrayed by his own servants, but yet imploring blessings on the King who had ordered his arraignment and refused him mercy. He shows us Wolsey checked by his King in mad career, and ordered to transmit a pardon to every subject who had refused to bend to his financial exactions. He shows us Katharine with all her dignity, feeling the divorce more as a calamity in itself, and as a wrong done by Henry's ministers

than as an injury and insult inflicted by himself. Again he shows us Wolsey struck down in a moment by the King's wrath, not so much for any misdoings of his own as for the proof that he was unfavourable to the marriage with Anne Bullen; and yet Wolsey, like all the others, kisses the hand which chastises him. It is the same with Cranmer and Gardiner, except that Cranmer averts anything like rebuke by kissing the rod in anticipation, while Gardiner kisses it in gratitude for a blow. And finally, it shows the divorced wife grateful for a cold crumb of comfort in the shape of a kind message from the husband who had put her away and taken a new Queen. In a word, throughout the play the Tudor King's personality is so completely in the ascendant, that even Wolsey's genius pales beside his master's. And Shakespeare also shows us how skilfully Henry fitted his personal humours to the predominant humour of the English people; how sternly he rebuked and how abruptly he annulled the policy of exacting from the people a tribute intended to pay for his own and his ministers' prodigalities; how he availed himself of the English jealousy of the Pope to make his divorce popular; and how he used the dread of a weak successor to himself to enlist the public mind on behalf of a new marriage, which might bring him a son. King Henry's is, indeed, in Shakespeare's play, an overbearing and predominant, but wholly *un*-moral, personality, which has the art of linking its caprices with the wishes of the people and the hopes of the nation. In this sense *King Henry VIII.* is in the highest degree a dramatic play, but only in this. Not a word spoken by the King is other than dramatic. But the other scenes of the play very frequently pass into historic and very undramatic reverie, quite out of place in the mouths of those who speak them.

*The Spectator*, July 3, 1875.







*Cymbeline - Cymbeline.*

## CYMBELINE.

## ACT III.

SCENE VI. *Wales. Before the Cave of Belarius.*

*Enter IMOGEN, in boy's clothes.*

*Imo.* I see a man's life is a tedious one :  
I have tired myself, and for two nights together  
Have made the ground my bed. I should be  
sick,  
But that my resolution helps me. Milford,  
When from the mountain-top Pisanio show'd  
thee,  
Thou wast within a ken : O Jove ! I think  
Foundations fly the wretched ; such, I mean,  
Where they should be relieved. Two beggars  
told me  
I could not miss my way : will poor folks lie,  
That have afflictions on them, knowing 'tis  
A punishment or trial ? Yes ; no wonder,  
When rich ones scarce tell true. To lapse in  
fulness  
Is sorer than to lie for need, and falsehood  
Is worse in kings than beggars. My dear lord !  
Thou art one o' the false ones. Now I think on  
thee,  
My hunger's gone ; but even before, I was  
At point to sink for food. But what is this ?  
Here is a path to't : 'tis some savage hold :  
I were best not call ; I dare not call : yet famine,  
Ere clean it o'erthrow nature, makes it valiant.  
Plenty and peace breeds cowards : hardness ever  
Of hardness is mother. Ho ! who's here ?

If anything that's civil, speak ; if savage,  
Take or lend. Ho ! No answer ? Then I'll  
enter.

Best draw my sword ; and if mine enemy  
But fear the sword like me, he'll scarcely look  
on't.

Such a foe, good heavens ! [*Exit, to the cave.*]

*Enter BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS.*

*Bel.* You, Polydore, have proved best wood-  
man and

Are master of the feast : Cadwal and I  
Will play the cook and servant ; 'tis our match :  
The sweat of industry would dry and die,  
But for the end it works to. Come ; our stomachs  
Will make what's homely savoury : weariness  
Can snore upon the flint, when resty sloth  
Finds the down pillow hard. Now peace be  
here,

Poor house, that keep'st thyself !

*Gui.* I am thoroughly weary.

*Arv.* I am weak with toil, yet strong in  
appetite.

*Gui.* There is cold meat i' the cave ; we'll  
browse on that

Whilst what we have kill'd be cook'd.

*Bel.* [*Looking into the cave*] Stay ; come not  
in.

But that it eats our victuals, I should think  
Here were a fairy.

*Gui.* What's the matter, sir ?

*Bel.* By Jupiter, an angel ! or, if not,  
An earthly paragon ! Behold divineness  
No elder than a boy !

## CHARACTER OF IMOGEN.

**I**MOGEN has often and rightly been considered as the most lovely and artless of the female characters which Shakespeare has depicted. Her appearance sheds warmth, fragrance, and brightness over the whole drama. More true and simple than Portia and Isabella, she is even more ideal. In harmonious union she blends exterior grace with moral beauty, and both with fresh straightforwardness of feeling and the utmost clearness of understanding. She is the sum and aggregate of fair womanhood, such as at last the poet conceived it. We

may doubt, whether in all poetry there is a second creature so charmingly depicted with such perfect truth to nature. At the same time the picture is as highly finished as generally is possible only to the wider range of epic poetry. Imogen is, next to Hamlet, the most fully drawn character in Shakespeare's poetry; the traits of her nature are almost inexhaustible; the poet makes amends by this perfected portrait of a woman of this artless kind, for the many sketches of similar natures in the dramas of this period, which he has merely outlined. When he transports us into Imogen's bedchamber, it is as living as if we sensibly breathed the atmosphere of it. Not alone he mentions and describes her outward beauty, but we see (on merely reading the play) the graceful movements, which so well become her, we are acquainted with all her endowments: how "angel-like" she sings, how "neat her cookery" is, as if "Juno had been sick, and she her dieter," how gracefully she wears her garments, so that she "made great Juno angry." But her inward qualities far outweigh these outward ones. And to make this clear to our minds, is our main business, because she is the chief personage of the play, the one which leads us on the path to the understanding of the whole.

The characteristic feature of this nature, which displays itself again and again in all the strange and most varied situations in which the poet has placed Imogen, is her mental freshness and healthiness. In the untroubled clearness of her mind, in the unspotted purity of her being, every outward circumstance is reflected, unruffled and undistorted, in the mirror of Imogen's soul, and at every occasion she acts from the purest instinct of a nature as sensible as it is practical. Rich in feeling, she is never morbidly sentimental, rich in fancy she is never fantastic, full of true, painful, earnest love, she is never touched by sickly passion. She is mistress of her soul under the most violent emotions, self-command accompanies her strongest feelings, and the most discreet actions follow her outbursts of violent passion, even when bold resolutions are required. . . . In this guileless nature, evil impressions are not too lasting, and she does not torment herself with too much reflection: she is led by the most enviable instinct, she has neither the superiority of a masculine mind like Portia, nor the timidity of Cordelia, nor the thoughtless inconsiderateness of Desdemona, nor the cheerfulness of Julia. Naturally cheerful, joyous, ingenuous, born to fortune, trained to endurance, she has nothing of that agitated passionateness, which foretells a tragic lot, which brings trouble upon itself of its own creating. We see her at the end of the play, when shaking off her long sufferings, and cruel deceptions, she gives herself at once to the happiest sensations, how quickly she jests and is playful with her brothers, how brightly her eyes glance round "the counterchange severally in all;"—and we feel that this being, fit for every situation, improved by every trial, has been wonderfully gifted by nature to be equal to every occasion. Temptations are not wanting. The time comes when the slanderer (Iachimo) makes her doubt the constancy of her Posthumus, when the tempter

attacks her own honour. . . . The trial of her fidelity rebounds powerlessly from her, the ramparts of her honour are easily defended; as *she*, thus far, would not have thought such an attack possible, it must henceforth seem impossible to the tempter himself. But the poet depicts a lasting siege of the forsaken being, and he shows us at the same time the palladium that makes her impregnable. We see her again in the evening after Iachimo's visit, reading till midnight, intending to rise again at four o'clock in the morning. She reads the tale of Philomel, as far as the passage where she yields to the seducer Tereus. This story and the day's experience rest obscurely in her mind when she utters her short prayer, commending herself to the protection of the gods, beseeching them to guard her "from fairies and the tempters of the night." She then sleeps calmly; her fancy is not excited; her healthy blood is not easily stirred by sensual emotions; even from the lawful caresses of her beloved one she had often shrunk with "rosy pudency." Pisanio esteems it as honourable in her that she undergoes

" More goddess-like than wife-like such assaults  
As would take in some virtue."

But she herself never would have had a thought that it was meritorious to ward off these assaults. . . . From the height of the glad hope of meeting Leonatus again, she is to fall into the depth of anguish. She must hear that her husband thinks her faithless, and has ordered her servant to kill her. . . . In this state of despair, she is ever alike collected and courageous, ready to seize on every means for bringing about a reunion with him, even adventuring "peril on her modesty, though not death on it!" On Pisanio's advice, she is ready to seek her husband in Rome, to leave the court, her parents, and England, and in male attire to enter the service of Lucius. The poet makes her assume the dress of a page, like Julia, Portia, Viola, Rosalind, Jessica, a favourite effect on the stage at that time, to which the custom of boys acting the female parts invited. In this instance the disguise is especially charming, because Imogen is quite incapable of laying aside her feminine nature with her feminine attire. Pisanio tells her that she must give up "fear and niceness, the handmaids of all women, or more truly, woman its pretty self." In these words the feminine nature of Imogen is entirely described. And this same charming nature she must now exchange for "a waggish courage;" she must be "ready in gibes, quick-answered, saucy, and as quarrellous as the weasel," as all those Rosalinds are. She undertakes this, but she cannot carry it out. It is well for her that in her assumed manhood she only meets with her virgin-like brothers in their cave, and the "holy" Lucius, otherwise her modesty and delicacy would have soon betrayed her sex. Suddenly at last in the wide circle of the camp, when she sees her Posthumus again, in the unconscious pressure of feeling, she forgets the man's part she had undertaken and inconsiderately betrays herself.

How enchanting is she in her brother's cave, when she unexpectedly meets those "kind creatures," who are kindred to her in nature even more than in blood! Idylls, so charming as those scenes are, can scarcely have been written again; these scenes, said Schlegel, could inspire a worn-out imagination anew with poetry. She enters the empty cave, confused and exhausted, she eats, she prays for the provider, and intends to leave money for her meat, when she is surprised by the hermits, who receive her with their natural delight in all human beings, who are soon enchanted with the attraction of her appearance, and take a still warmer interest in her, when with careful observation they have remarked how "grief and patience are rooted" in her soul. But she, on her side also, feels herself no less powerfully attracted. Among such good creatures her grief would soon have been assuaged, ay, perhaps she might have forgotten her journey to Lucius and to Posthumus! Not that any feminine feeling had drawn her to the amiable youths! The poet has taken great care not to let us imagine this. The brothers indeed soon have an instinctive feeling, that this beautiful boy has more of woman's nature in him than man's; when from a natural impulse she relieves them of all domestic matters, when she entreats them to go hunting, on the plea, that their daily custom shall not be interrupted, they say that she must be their housewife, and Guiderius declares that "were she a woman, he should woo her hand." But she, as a woman, does not respond to this. She has all at once found here, what she had never dreamt of in the world,—creatures, who in their untainted innocence even surpassed her Posthumus; how natural that on this occasion, the remembrance of Posthumus, without her expressing it, is no longer so clear as it was, that she reflects on his falsity, that she imagines the possibility, that the wish arises in her heart, of living a life of innocence here with these innocent beings, among whom she had found a substitute for her uncertain, ay, lost support! But, nevertheless, her fidelity to Posthumus would not even here be tempted! As a woman, as Imogen, to leave him and belong to another, this thought never even now enters her pure faithful soul. "Pardon me," in these meaning words as ingenuous as they are innocent, the slumbering, nascent wish is clothed:—

"Pardon me gods!  
*I'd change my sex* to be companion with them,  
 Since Leonatus' false."

This wish to stay with the dwellers in the cave, preserving intact her sacred duty towards Posthumus, has its source in yet another feature in Imogen's character, connected with her healthy simplicity, with her natural view of a world abounding with all that is unnatural. She had remained true, plain, and innocent at the court, in the midst of intrigues and baseness. She could maintain herself so, essentially by the power alone of that womanly property of not allowing disagreeable external things to influence her. But

in the secret depths of her soul another impulse was also at work, that which alienates her from all the splendour of high life, although this had been represented to her as the real essence of life, and all beyond the court had been designated as savage. At the very catastrophe of the banishment of Posthumus, she wishes herself "a neatherd's daughter," and him the "neighbour shepherd's son;" she would have thought it happiness if she had been "thief-stolen as her two brothers" were; she feels miserable with her longings amid the splendour of rank; those seemed to her blessed who, "how mean soe'er, could have their honest wills." Here in her brothers' cave she now meets with beings who prove to her that she has all along been deceived, that her inward impulse would have guided her better; that

"The imperious seas breed monsters: for the dish,  
Poor tributary rivers as sweet fish."

Here in the cave she remembers the sentence that expresses her own innermost opinion:—"Man and man should be brothers; but clay and clay differs in dignity, whose dust is both alike." She fosters this opinion not only for a quiet life, such as is more suitable to women, not only for the sorrowful experience which she has had in courtly life, she fosters it also because she would far rather abandon the throne than her Posthumus. It is for this reason that the wish escapes her here in the cave that these youths could be her brothers; then had "her prize been less, and so more equal ballasting to her Posthumus." As the royal blood in these brothers longed with the might of natural desire to escape out of lowliness and solitude into the life of the world, so her woman's blood, on the contrary, as naturally longed to escape out of the intrigues of the world so well known to her, into retirement and peace.

DR. G. G. GERVINUS.—*Shakespeare Commentaries*, translated by F. E. Bunnett  
(1863), Vol. II., pp. 261—271.

### SHAKESPEARE'S PERIOD OF GLOOM FOLLOWED BY SERENITY AND REPOSE.

UP to the middle of Shakespeare's poetic career we find every appearance of his having possessed a joyous unembarrassed spirit. There is nothing harsh or jarring in his tone of feeling: what melancholy there is is but the softly harmonious poetic melancholy of *Romeo and Juliet*. I often think that in a class of characters which abound in the plays of the first and part of the second period we may see some image of Shakespeare's own temper in the earlier years of his manhood. I mean the youths of birth and breeding

whom he has introduced in such numbers into these plays—the Biron, the Mercutio, the Benedicks. They are marked, indeed, by different traits; but the varieties are wrought upon a common basis. They are all represented as combining with active intellect, lively fancy, and dexterous wit, an airy animation and elastic buoyancy of tone. I cannot doubt that Shakespeare, perhaps unconsciously, drew them from himself—that he had not here, as in other cases, to pass, by an effort of imagination, out of his personality—but had only to communicate freely to these creations the exuberance of his own youthful nature.

About the close of the sixteenth century there is a marked alteration in his tone. I do not mean merely that there is more gravity of thought and seriousness of feeling; these would be the natural fruit of advancing years. "There seems," says Hallam, "to have been a period of Shakespeare's life when his heart was ill at ease, and ill content with the world or his own conscience; the memory of hours misspent, the pang of affection misplaced or unrequited, the experience of man's worsen nature which intercourse with unworthy associates, by choice or circumstance, peculiarly teaches; these as they sank down into the depths of his great mind, seem not only to have inspired into it the conception of Lear and Timon, but that of one primary character—the censurer of mankind." And the critic proceeds to show how this one character, changing its form but retaining its essence, appears in several of the plays—how the type is seen alike in the "philosophic melancholy" of Jacques—in the wayward gloom of Hamlet, broken by flashes of "feigned gaiety and extravagance"—in the stern, harsh justice of the Duke in *Measure for Measure*—in the inspirations which lend "an awful eloquence" to the frenzy of Lear—and in the fierce "Juvenalian satire" of the Athenian misanthrope.

Mr. Knight, who deserves acknowledgment as one of the most genial and reverential of Shakespeare's commentators, rejects this theory of Hallam's, and regards all these persons of the poet's drama simply as creatures of his art, not in any degree as exponents of his self-consciousness. But I think, in order to do so, it is necessary either to neglect the Sonnets, or to give them a non-natural interpretation. It is clear from those poems (which belong to the interval between 1599 and 1603) that about the middle of his author-life he passed through a prolonged moral crisis. They show that the hollowness and insincerity which experience of the world had made known to him, and the social wrongs and abuses he had witnessed, had powerfully affected his mind. He had also, too plainly, tasted of the Dead Sea fruits of unlawful pleasure, which sooner or later turn to ashes on the lips. And it is intimated that in some way or other he had been exposed to public censure and shame. Under the pressure of gloomy thoughts he breaks out in the 66th Sonnet,

"Tired with all these, for restful death I cry."



The tone of many of the Sonnets is what has been well called a "Hamlet-like discontent" with others and with himself; and, in particular, the one which opens with the line I have quoted has much in common with the celebrated soliloquy "To be, or not to be." The state of feeling to which the "censurer of mankind" gives utterance was therefore undoubtedly a phase through which Shakespeare's own mind was passing about the time when he wrote the plays in which that character appears.

But Shakespeare was not to sink into such morbid misanthropy as corroded the soul of Swift. The sins and wrongs he saw around him, the bitterness of spirit he felt within, did not rob him of his faith in humanity. That he all along believed intensely in human love, and friendship, and fidelity is sufficiently proved by the creation of Kent and Cordelia. In his later works, *Macbeth* and the rest, the character described by Hallam, and the tone of sentiment which it embodies, never again present themselves. Nay, we are able to follow the poet into a serene and peaceful region, in which the old sweetness and cheerfulness are restored, joined with all the breadth and elevation of his maturity. Three of the works of the last period, which must be referred to its closing years, stand in some degree apart from the other members of the group, I mean *Cymbeline*, the *Winter's Tale*, and the *Tempest*. It is a notion of Mr. Spalding's, and one to which we would gladly assent, that these works were the productions of the quiet evening of Shakespeare's life, after he had returned to Stratford, when in tranquil meditation he wandered through his native fields or along the banks of the Avon. Willingly, too, would we accept the idea of Campbell, worthy of a poet, and which neither external nor internal evidence contradicts, that the *Tempest* was the last of all his plays, that in it he was inspired to represent himself under the image of the potent and beneficent enchanter, and that our Prospero, when the dainty Ariel of his imagination had completed this last task, forswore his magic, and buried the implements of his art deeper than ever plummet sounded. However this may be, it is with lively satisfaction that we see imaged in these latest writings, and particularly in the *Tempest*, the final calmness and harmony of the poet's soul. Over the discords, contradictions, and perplexities of life, he here serenely triumphs; and, with mind disengaged, and temper in which the sportive and the serious are exquisitely blended, throws into air that wonderful cloud-picture of the Enchanted Isle. How noble the figure of Prospero! How pure and tender the character of Miranda--his most exquisite ideal of the maiden, as Imogen of the wife! What delicacy, yet distinctiveness in the painting! What lofty wisdom in the thought! What all-embracing humanity in the sentiment!

PROFESSOR J. K. INGRAM.—*Shakespeare, a Lecture in "The Afternoon Lectures on English Literature"* (1863).

## THE TEMPEST.

## ACT I.

SCENE II. *The Island. Before PROSPERO'S Cell.*  
*Enter PROSPERO and MIRANDA.*

*Mir.* If by your art, my dearest father, you have  
 Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.  
 The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking  
 pitch,  
 But that the sea, mounting to the welkin's cheek,  
 Dashes the fire out. O, I have suffered  
 With those that I saw suffer : a brave vessel,  
 Who had, no doubt, some noble creature in her,  
 Dash'd all to pieces. O, the cry did knock  
 Against my very heart. Poor souls, they perish'd !  
 Had I been any god of power, I would  
 Have sunk the sea within the earth or e'er  
 It should the good ship so have swallow'd and  
 The fraughting souls within her.

*Pros.* Be collected :  
 No more amazement : tell your piteous heart  
 There's no harm done.

*Mir.* O, woe the day !  
*Pros.* No harm.

I have done nothing but in care of thee,  
 Of thee, my dear one, thee, my daughter, who  
 Art ignorant of what thou art, nought knowing  
 Of whence I am, nor that I am more better  
 Than Prospero, master of a full poor cell,  
 And thy no greater father.

*Mir.* More to know  
 Did never meddle with my thoughts.

*Pros.* 'Tis time  
 I should inform thee farther. Lend thy hand,  
 And pluck my magic garment from me. So :  
 [*Lays down his mantle.*]

Lie there, my art. Wipe thou thine eyes ; have  
 comfort.

The direful spectacle of the wreck, which touch'd  
 The very virtue of compassion in thee,  
 I have with such provision in mine art  
 So safely ordered that there is no soul—  
 No, not so much perdition as an hair  
 Betid to any creature in the vessel  
 Which thou heard'st cry, which thou saw'st sink.

## "THE TEMPEST."

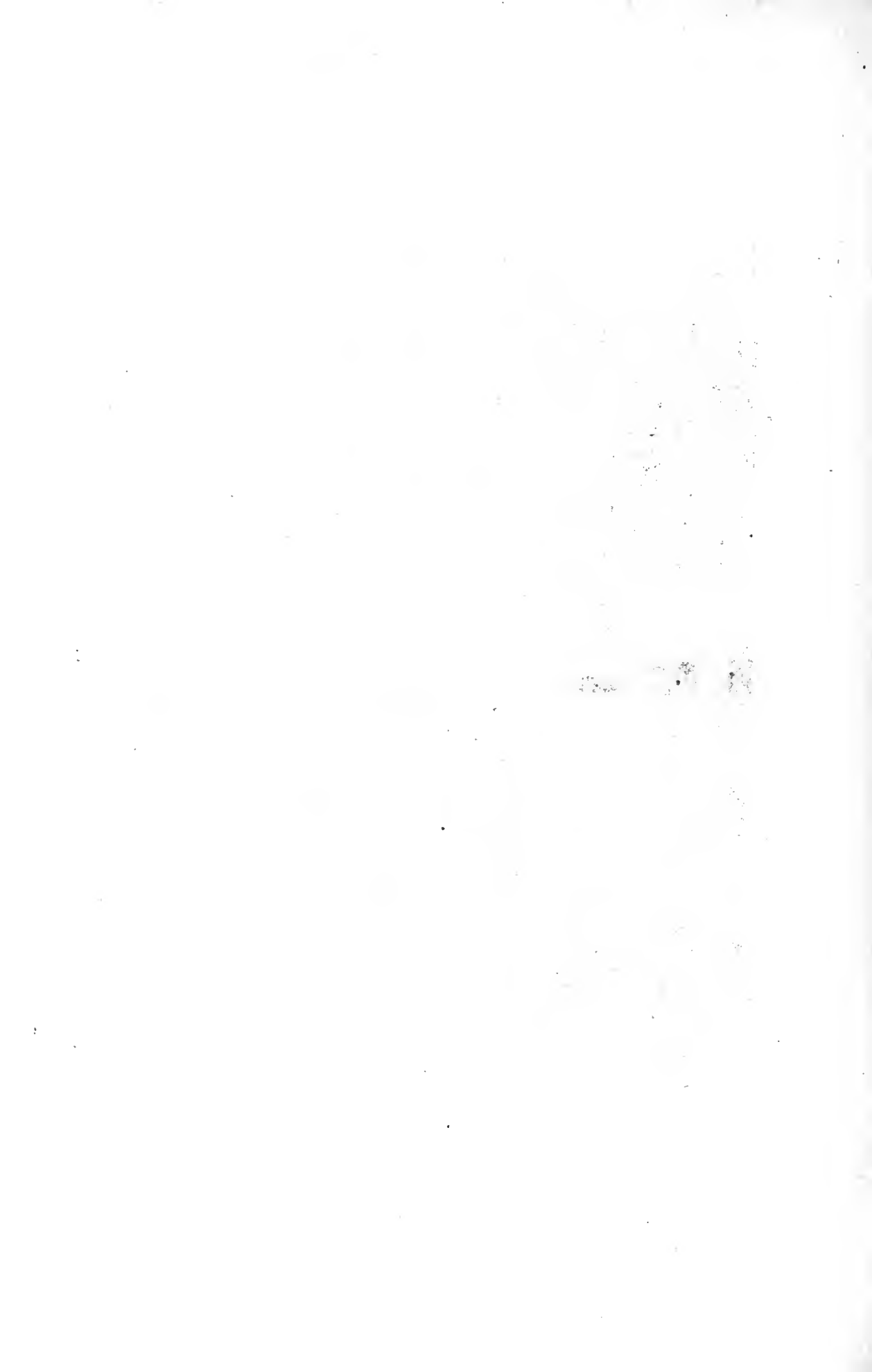
NO work can more worthily crown the dramatic career of the poet than *The Tempest*. We know that it is impossible to place it earlier than 1609, that its date almost certainly is 1611; and until it be demonstrated beyond dispute that it was followed by other productions, I shall persist in seeing in it . . . the latest born of Shakespeare's works, and that in which he bids the public adieu. The admirable serenity which is present throughout the plays, corresponds, indeed, with the state of mind of one who is detaching himself from worldly preoccupations, and who desires to possess his soul in a state of recollection and in retreat. As with *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, the marvellous constitutes the substance of the play, and the exquisite Ariel belongs to the same family as Oberon's henchman, Puck. But in the present instance the marvellous, far from giving expression to



W. Heilmann del.

1841. 6

*Der Sturm - The Tempest.*



a mere caprice of fancy, obeys the laws of a rigorous logic, and contributes to the ethical purpose of the piece. The adventures do not follow one another as if by accident, as in a masque, and the personages are not the playthings of blind chance. In the *Tempest* everything is foreseen and ordered by a superior will. From the first act we perceive the hand of Prospero, the invincible might of which is felt even to the close. This enchanter, under whose garb Shakespeare conceals himself, would try his enemies and his friends, would lead the former to repentance by expiation, the latter to happiness through sacrifice, and finally resolve all difficulties in the spirit of justice and of charity. To attain this he traces out his plan, of which the several scenes of the play are but the parts, and he executes it with mathematical precision. So exactly does he order things that he imposes upon himself a limit of time which he will not pass beyond, and beyond which, in fact, he does not pass. By the end of three hours the events which he is preparing must have realised themselves, and he is careful to recall to mind, on two separate occasions, that he has determined not to exceed that term.

Shakespeare, in his last two plays, evidently handles the question of the unities which had been objected against him by the poets of the classical school and especially by Ben Jonson. In *The Winter's Tale* he declares that he has a right to disregard the unities, and to prove this he places an interval of seventeen years between the first and the second part of his drama. Here, on the contrary, he scrupulously observes them, as if to show that it is just as easy to him to respect them, that they do not trammel his imagination, and that, even with a fantastic subject, he can, without sacrificing in any degree the fulness and variety of his conceptions, adapt himself to them as well as the most timid imitator of antiquity. . . .

*The Tempest*, although its ordonnance is strict, does not the less contain the richest elements of the drama, marvellous scenes, surprising adventures, genuine passions, and living characters. The play is composed by a skilful mingling of supernatural events and of realities, which excite curiosity to the highest point, and which, while astonishing the judgment, nevertheless end by satisfying it. The subject carries the mind of the reader into an order of ideas which interested in a singular degree the countrymen of Shakespeare in his own day. It sets us down in a foreign and unknown land, inhabited by a race different from our own, in the midst of the enchantments of a beautiful earth, and sea, and sky; and there it retains us by all the attractions of novelty. What a source of interest for a people of travellers and of sailors, who, from the sixteenth century, had sent forth into America a race of bold explorers, and was preparing that maritime and colonial power which has constituted the grandeur of the nation!

It was the story of a celebrated voyage that furnished Shakespeare with the first idea of *The Tempest*. In 1609 George Somers set sail with thirty vessels for Virginia; was separated from his fleet by a gale; arrived with only the admiral's vessel at the Bermudas;

and published a narrative of his expedition, under the title of *A Discovery of the Bermudas, otherwise called the Isle of Devils*. . . . Shakespeare, who loved popular subjects, seized on this book, and made it the point of departure of his play. *He* also told of a tempest, of sailors who struggled with the sea, of a dispersed squadron, and the chief vessel separated from the rest, and driven by the gale upon a desert shore. He also painted, like Somers, the delightful climate and bright landscape of the island, and in like manner peopled it with aerial spirits, whose music the superstitious sailor had supposed he heard under the great trees moved by the wind. Shakespeare knew what an eager curiosity was roused in the people by these stories of extraordinary voyages, and generally by all that came from afar. He took advantage of this for the success of his work; but he also jests at this curiosity, as he has done at so many other weaknesses of men, when he puts into the mouth of Trinculo, who takes Caliban for a sea-monster, the words, "Were I in England now, and had but this fish painted, not a holiday-fool there but would give a piece of silver; there would this monster make a man; any strange beast there makes a man; when they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian."

No dramatic poet ever knew better than did Shakespeare what suited his public, or, while smiling at its tastes, to turn them more to his own advantage. The magical array with which he surrounds Prospero was no less fitted to engage the imaginations of Englishmen than the strange and distant region in which Shakespeare placed him. In his time a belief in magic still survived; works were written upon the search for treasures, upon the occult sciences, and the method of evoking spirits. Magicians were divided into two classes according to the degree of their power, and they were suspected of having bartered their souls to the devil in exchange for the influence which they exerted over the supernatural world. The pretensions of John Dee, whom Ben Jonson unmasked with such bitter irony in the *Alchemist*, were seriously considered. Prospero wears the traditional costume of his fellows: the astrologer's peaked hat, the robe studded over with stars, and the magic ring. His attendant, Ariel, recalls the fairy Sibylla, whom it was in the power of only the most powerful magicians to summon. . . . Prospero holds in his hands all the threads of the intrigue. When we know thoroughly his character and his doings we know the significance of the play. . . . And yet while Prospero rules without difficulty the world of spirits, his efforts are set at defiance by the resistance of one evil creature who is a rebel against all authority. He teaches language and the first elements of knowledge to Caliban. The latter makes use of what he has learnt only to curse his master and to attempt to destroy him.

Caliban's part has been the occasion for voluminous commentaries. According to certain critics he represents not only the races of the new world, ignorant as they were and cruel, the Cannibals, of which word his name seems to be an anagram, but also the mass

of the populace, and the evil instincts of the multitude. They go so far as to assert that Shakespeare, a partizan of the aristocracy, and hostile to the influence of the lower orders, personifies in this abject nature, the revolutionary spirit which he had previously condemned when he pictured Jack Cade's insurrection, and the plebeians of the time of Julius Cæsar. "Caliban," exclaims Herr Kreyssig, "is the people. Observe his actions and pronounce judgment upon him. Like the people he worships all that flatters his senses, he prostrates himself before a drunken sailor who gives him wine to drink, he admires the brute courage of Stephano, he detests the master who governs him with justice, he would fain accept a worse master since the latter would encourage his vices, and when he chants his drinking song, 'Ban, 'ban, Ca-Caliban; freedom, freedom,' he resumes in it all the manifestoes of the democracy—which demands no more than the freedom to do evil. Such is the concealed sense of Shakespeare's creation, and the enigma which it belongs only to penetrative intellects to decipher." This penetration terrifies me, and I fear that the German critics will before long enter on a discussion *en règle* of the Revolution and the *ancien régime* in connection with *The Tempest*. Gervinus has already found occasion to treat of the events of 1848 with reference to *Richard II.* I confess I am unable to discover these profound political ideas under the grotesque exterior of Caliban. When Shakespeare desires to represent the people, he has painted them as they are visible to each of us, without recourse to any symbol; here in the costume of the traders or the working-folk of London, there with the garb and features of the citizens of Rome. Caliban no more resembles the people than a cannibal resembles a dweller in our cities. He simply represents the primitive man abandoned to himself; and if Shakespeare has a philosophical purpose in introducing this persons of the drama it is simpler and more probable than what has been attributed to him. I discern only a fine irony directed against the dreamers of his age, such as Thomas More and Campanella, who preceded Rousseau in opposing the innocence of the state of nature to the miseries of civilization. "Man is born good," said the reformers and philanthropists, before the same was said by the philosopher of Geneva; "it is society that corrupts him." Shakespeare refutes this paradox by a portrait of the savage, as travellers in recently-discovered countries had found him, with his sensual appetites, his ferocity, and his homicidal wiles. "Where then is this ideal perfection which everywhere precedes civilization, and which civilization destroys? On the contrary, the less civilized man is, the nearer he approaches the brutes. Your hero," Shakespeare seems to say to Utopian thinkers, "walks on four feet as willingly as on two, he has a hairy skin, he does mischief openly and forcibly when he dares, and by surprise and stratagem when he fears; in a word, his name is Caliban. Would you bring back humanity from the degree of intelligence which Prospero represents to the dull brutality of the son of Sycorax?" This was, in a manner, a dramatic pleading on behalf of the colonies which were bearing the customs

and the religion of England to the new world. . . . Under another form the poet takes up his thesis when assailing those reformers who would change the state of society, destroy its inequalities, establish a community of goods, and attain an ideal of perfection which does not accord with human nature. The famous passage which he has translated from Montaigne is a sort of ironical sally against the chimerical politicians, who dream of an age of gold impossible to be realized. Gonzalo speaks :—

“T’ the commonwealth, I would by contraries  
Execute all things : for no kind of traffic  
Would I admit ; no name of magistrate ;  
Letters should not be known ; riches, poverty,  
And use of service, none ; contract, succession,  
Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none ;  
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil ;  
No occupation ; all men idle, all ;  
And women too, but innocent and pure ;  
No sovereignty.”

The speaker who expresses such thoughts as these sets those around him laughing at his expense, and he in turn makes sport of the credulity with which they took for serious a playful sally. The poet's intention is evident. By the mouths of the several personages whom he puts upon the stage, as well the honest old counsellor Gonzalo as the hard-minded politicians Sebastian and Antonio, he overwhelms the Utopian philosophers with epigrams. Prospero, who expresses Shakespeare's own thought, is far from running into their aberrations. He accepts men as they are, without falling into any illusion about their natural qualities ; he does not believe that they are born good, he knows, on the contrary, that they bear within them the germ of manifold vices ; nevertheless he does not despair of the human species, and instead of striving to lead them back to a state of nature, that is, to barbarism, to make them better, he is at pains to correct them by reason and with the help of experience. He pours light into and upon the guilty, he obliges them to re-enter into themselves, he awakens in them a moral sense, and it is through the ascendancy of a superior intelligence, and not by plunging them back into ignorance, that he regenerates them. In order to accomplish the task which he has laid upon himself, as much of knowledge and intellectual resource is needed as of will. Where the philosopher succeeds the uninstructed man would have failed. He combines, indeed, with the greatest art all the various means which he employs to convert the guilty. . . .

In his tragedies Shakespeare does not pardon the criminals ; he yields them up without remorse to the destiny which they have made for themselves. Here he presents to us



by the conceptions of his genius, abandons the brilliant theatre of his fame. Of all human ambitions but one remains with him—that of dying well :—

“In the morn  
I'll bring you to your ship, and so to Naples,  
Where I have hope to see the nuptial  
Of these our dear belov'd solénnised ;  
And thence retire me to my Milan, where  
Every third thought shall be my grave.”

Such is the poet's farewell to the public. He abdicates as a conqueror after a victory.<sup>1</sup>

A. MEZIÈRES.—*Shakespeare, ses Œuvres et ses Critiques* (ed. 1865), pp. 441—456.

<sup>1</sup> It may be worth while to note the error of  
M. Mezières in ascribing to Sir George Some

the account of the wreck which was written by  
Silvester Jourdan.

## THE WINTER'S TALE.

## ACT I.

SCENE II. *A Room of State in LEONTES' Palace.*

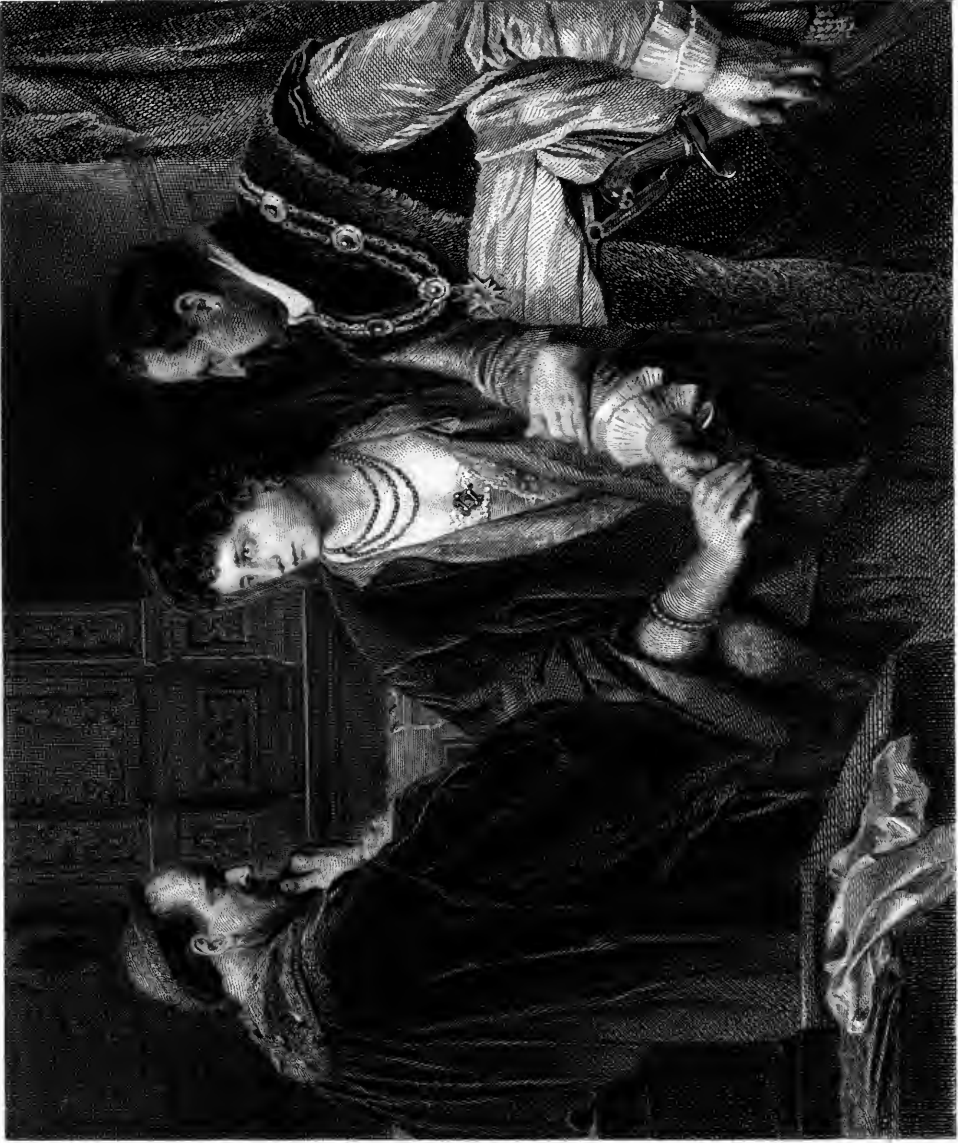
LEONTES, HERMIONE, POLIXENES, and others.

*Leontes.* Is he won yet?*Hermione.* He'll stay, my lord.*Leon.* At my request he would not.Hermione, my dearest, thou never spokest  
To better purpose.*Her.* Never?*Leon.* Never, but once.*Her.* What! have I twice said well? when  
was't before?I prithee tell me; cram's with praise and make's  
As fat as tame things: one good deed dying  
tonguelessSlaughters a thousand waiting upon that.  
Our praises are our wages: you may ride's  
With one soft kiss a thousand furlongs ere  
With spur we heat an acre. But to the goal:  
My last good deed was to entreat his stay:  
What was my first? it has an elder sister,Or I mistake you: O, would her name were  
Grace!But once before I spoke to the purpose: when?  
Nay, let me have't; I long.*Leon.* Why, that was when  
Three crabbed months had sour'd themselves to  
death,Ere I could make thee open thy white hand  
And clap thyself my love: then didst thou utter,  
'I am yours for ever.'*Her.* 'Tis grace indeed.  
Why, lo you now, I have spoke to the purpose  
twice:The one for ever earn'd a royal husband;  
The other for some while a friend.*Leon.* [*Aside*] Too hot, too hot!  
To mingle friendship far is mingling bloods.  
I have tremor cordis on me: my heart dances;  
But not for joy; not joy. This entertainment  
May a free face put on, derive a liberty  
From heartiness, from bounty, fertile bosom,  
And well become the agent: 't may, I grant;  
But to be paddling palms and pinching fingers,  
As now they are, and making practised smiles,  
As in a looking-glass, and then to sigh, as 'twere  
The mort o' the deer.

## HERMIONE.

THE character of Hermione exhibits what is never found in the other sex, but rarely in our own—yet sometimes:—dignity without pride, love without passion, and tenderness without weakness. To conceive a character in which there enters so much of the negative required perhaps no rare and astonishing effort of genius, such as created a Juliet, a Miranda, or a Lady Macbeth; but to delineate such a character in the poetical form, to develop it through the medium of action and dialogue, without the aid of description: to preserve its tranquil, mild, and serious beauty, its unimpassioned dignity, and at the same time keep the strongest hold upon our sympathy and our imagination; and out of this exterior calm produce the most profound pathos, the most vivid impression of life and internal power:—it is this which renders the character of Hermione one of Shakespeare's masterpieces.

Hermione is a queen, a matron, and a mother; she is good and beautiful, and royally descended. A majestic sweetness, a grand and gracious simplicity, an easy, unforced, yet



Das Wintermärchen The Winter Tale



dignified self-possession, are in all her deportment, and in every word she utters. She is one of those characters of whom it has been said proverbially, that "still waters run deep." Her passions are not vehement, but in her settled mind the sources of pain or pleasure, love or resentment, are like the springs that feed the mountain lakes, impenetrable, unfathomable, and inexhaustible. . . . There are several among Shakespeare's characters which exercise a far stronger power over our feelings, our fancy, our understanding than that of Hermione; but not one—unless, perhaps, Cordelia—constructed upon so high and pure a principle. It is the union of gentleness with power which constitutes the perfection of mental grace. Thus among the ancients, with whom the *graces* were also the *charities* (to show, perhaps, that while form alone may constitute beauty, sentiment is necessary to grace), one and the same word signified equally *strength* and *virtue*. This feeling, carried into the fine arts, was the secret of the antique grace—the grace of repose. The same eternal nature—the same sense of immutable truth and beauty, which revealed this sublime principle of art to the ancient Greeks, revealed it to the genius of Shakespeare; and the character of Hermione, in which we have the same largeness of conception and delicacy of execution,—the same effect of suffering without passion, and grandeur without effort, is an instance, I think, that he felt within himself, and by intuition, what we study all our lives in the remains of ancient art. The calm, regular, classical beauty of Hermione's character is the more impressive from the wild and Gothic accompaniments of her story, and the beautiful relief afforded by the pastoral and romantic grace which is thrown around her daughter Perdita.

MRS. JAMESON.—*Characteristics of Women*, Vol. II. pp. 6—7, and pp. 23—24 (ed. 1858).

### THE JEALOUSY OF LEONTES.

THE idea of this delightful drama is a genuine jealousy of disposition, and it should be immediately followed by the perusal of *Othello*, which is the direct contrast of it in every particular. For jealousy is a vice of the mind, a culpable tendency of the temper, having certain well-known and well-defined effects and concomitants, all of which are visible in Leontes, and, I boldly say, not one of which marks its presence in *Othello*;—such as, first, an excitability by the most inadequate causes, and an eagerness to snatch at proofs; secondly, a grossness of conception, and a disposition to degrade the object of the passion by sensual fancies and images; thirdly, a sense of shame of his own feelings exhibited in a solitary moodiness of humour, and yet from the violence of the passion forced to utter itself, and therefore catching occasions to ease the mind by ambiguities, equivoques, by talking to those who cannot, and who are known not to be

able to understand what is said to them,—in short, by soliloquy in the form of dialogue, and hence a confused, broken, and fragmentary manner; fourthly, a dread of vulgar ridicule, as distinct from a high sense of honour, or a mistaken sense of duty; and lastly, and immediately, consequent on this, a spirit of selfish vindictiveness.

S. T. COLERIDGE.—*Shakespeare Notes and Lectures* (1874), pp. 243—244.

### SPIRIT OF FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION IN SHAKESPEARE'S LAST PLAYS.

It is not to be wondered at that Shakespeare now should feel delivered from the strong urge of imagination and feeling, and should write in a more pleasurable, more leisurely, and not so great a manner. The period of the tragedies was ended. In the tragedies Shakespeare had made his inquisition into the mystery of evil. He had studied those injuries of man to man which are irreparable. He had seen the innocent suffering with the guilty. Death came and removed the criminal and his victim from human sight, and we were left, with solemn awe upon our hearts, in presence of the insoluble problems of life. There lay Duncan, who had "borne his faculties so meek," who had been "so clear in his great office," foully done to death; there lay Cordelia lifeless in the arms of Lear; there, Desdemona, murmuring no word, upon the bed; there, Antony, the ruin of Cleopatra's magic; and last, Timon, most desperate fugitive from life, finding his sole refuge under the oblivious and barren wave. At the same time that Shakespeare had shown the tragic mystery of human life, he had fortified the heart by showing that to suffer is not the supreme evil with man, and that loyalty and innocence, and self-sacrifice, and pure redeeming ardour, exist, and cannot be defeated. Now, in his last period of authorship, Shakespeare remained grave—how could it be otherwise?—but his severity was tempered and purified. He had less need of the crude doctrine of Stoicism, because the tonic of such wisdom as exists in Stoicism had been taken up and absorbed into his blood.

Shakespearé still thought of the graver trials and tests which life applies to human character, of the wrongs which man inflicts on man; but his present temper demanded not a tragic issue,—it rather demanded an issue into joy or peace. The dissonance must be resolved into a harmony, clear and rapturous, or solemn and profound. And, accordingly, in each of these plays, *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, *The Tempest*, while grievous errors of the heart are shown to us, and wrongs of man to man as cruel as those of the great tragedies, at the end there is a resolution of the dissonance,—a reconciliation. This is the word which interprets Shakespeare's latest plays—reconciliation, "word over all, beautiful as the sky." It is not, as in the earlier comedies—*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*,

*Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It*, and others—a mere *dénouement*. The resolution of the discords in these latest plays is not a mere stage necessity, or a necessity of composition, resorted to by the dramatist to effect an ending of his play, and little interesting his imagination or his heart. Its significance here is ethical and spiritual; it is a moral necessity.

In *The Winter's Tale*, the jealousy of Leontes is not less, but more fierce and unjust than that of Othello. No Iago whispers poisonous suspicion in Leontes' ear. His wife is not untried, not did she yield to him her heart with the sweet proneness of Desdemona :—

“ Three crabbed months had soured themselves to death  
Ere I could make thee open thy white hand,  
And clap thyself my love ; then didst thou utter,  
' I am yours for ever.' ”

Hermione is suspected of sudden and shameless dishonour, she who is a matron, the mother of Leontes' children, a woman of serious and sweet dignity of character, inured to a noble self-command, and frank only through the consciousness of invulnerable loyalty.<sup>1</sup> The passion of Leontes is not like that of Othello, a terrible chaos of soul; confusion and despair at the loss of what had been to him the fairest thing on earth; there is a gross personal resentment in the heart of Leontes; not sorrowful, judicial indignation; his passion is hideously grotesque, while that of Othello is pathetic.

The consequences of this jealous madness of Leontes are less calamitous than the ruin wrought by Othello's jealousy, because Hermione is courageous and collected, and possessed of a fortitude of heart which years are unable to subdue :—

“ There's some ill planet reigns.  
I must be patient till the heavens look  
With an aspect more favourable. Good my lords,  
I am not prone to weeping, as our sex  
Commonly are; the want of which vain dew,  
Perchance, shall dry your pities; but I have  
That honourable grief lodg'd here which burns  
Worse than tears drown. 'Beseech you all, my lords,  
With thoughts so qualified as your charities  
Shall best instruct you, measure me; and so  
The king's will be perform'd ! ”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The contrast between *Othello* and *The Winter's Tale* has been noticed by Coleridge, and is admirably drawn out in detail by Gervinus and Kreyssig, to whose treatment of the subject the above paragraph is indebted.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Jameson applies to the passion of Hermione the fine saying of Madame de Staël, “ Il pouvait y avoir des vagues majestueuses, et non de l'orage dans son cœur.”

But although the wave of calamity is broken by the firm resistance offered by the fortitude of Hermione, it commits ravage enough to make it remembered. Upon the Queen comes a lifetime of solitude and pain. The hopeful son of Leontes and Hermione is done to death, and the infant Perdita is estranged from her kindred and her friends. But at length the heart of Leontes is instructed and purified by anguish and remorse. He has "performed a saint-like sorrow," redeemed his faults, paid down more penitence than done trespass :—

" Whilst I remember

Her and her virtues, I cannot forget  
My blemishes in them, and so still think of  
The wrong I did myself ; which was so much  
That heirless it hath made my kingdom, and  
Destroy'd the sweet'st companion that e'er man  
Bred his hopes out of."

And Leontes is received back without reproach into the arms of his wife ; she embraces him in silence, allowing the good pain of his repentance to effect its utmost work.

Hermione, Imogen, Prospero,—these are, as it were, names for gracious powers which extend forgiveness to men. From the first Hermione, whose clear-sightedness is equal to her courage, had perceived that her husband laboured under a delusion which was cruel and calamitous to himself. From the first she transcends all blind resentment, and has true pity for the man who wrongs her. But if she has fortitude for her own uses, she also is able to accept for her husband the inevitable pain which is needful to restore him to his better mind. She will not shorten the term of his suffering, because that suffering is beneficent. And at the last her silent embrace carries with it—and justly—a portion of that truth she had uttered long before :—

" How will this grieve you

When you shall come to clearer knowledge that  
You thus have published me? Gentle my lord,  
You scarce can right me thoroughly then to say  
You did mistake me."

The calm and complete comprehension of the fact is a possession painful yet precious to Hermione, and it lifts her above all vulgar confusion of heart or temper, and above all unjust resentment.

Imogen, who is the reverse of grave and massive in character, but who has an exquisite vivacity of feeling and of fancy, and a heart pure, quick, and ardent, passes from the swoon of her sudden anguish to a mood of bright and keen resentment, which is free from every trace of vindictive passion, and is indeed only pain disguised. And in like manner she forgives, not with self-possession, and a broad, tranquil joy in the accomplished fact, but through a pure ardour, an exquisite eagerness of love and of delight.



Prospero's forgiveness is solemn, judicial, and has in it something abstract and impersonal. He cannot wrong his own higher nature, he cannot wrong the nobler reason, by cherishing so unworthy a passion as the desire of vengeance. Sebastian and Antonio, from whose conscience no remorse has been elicited, are met by no comfortable pardon. They have received their lesson of failure and of pain, and may possibly be convinced of the good sense and prudence of honourable dealing, even if they cannot perceive its moral obligation. Alonso, who is repentant, is solemnly pardoned. The forgiveness of Prospero is an embodiment of impartial wisdom and loving justice.

EDWARD DOWDEN.—*Shakspeare, his Mind and Art* (1875), pp. 405—413.

### “STRATFORD WILL HELP YOU TO UNDERSTAND SHAKESPEARE.”

Go to Stratford-upon-Avon, and see the town where Shakespeare was born, and bred, and died; the country over which he wandered and played when a boy, whose beauties and whose lore, as a man, he put into his plays. Go either in spring, in April, “when the greatest poet was born in Nature's sweetest time,” and let Mr. Wise (*Shakspeare: his Birthplace and its Neighbourhood*, pp. 44, 58, &c. &c.) tell you how “everything is full of beauty” that you'll see; or go in full summer, as I did one afternoon in July this year. See first the little low room where tradition says Shakespeare was born, though his father did not buy the house till eleven years after his birth;<sup>1</sup> look at the foundations of “New Place,” walk on the site of Shakespeare's house, in the garden whose soil he must often have trod, thinking of his boyhood and hasty marriage, of London, with its trials and triumphs, and the wonders he has created for its delight; follow his body, past the school where he had learnt, to its grave in the Avon-side church ringed with elms; see the worn slab that covers his bones, with wife's and daughter's beside; look up at the bust which figures the case of the brain and heart that have so enriched the world, which shows you more truly than anything else what Shakespeare was like in the flesh; try to see in those hazel eyes, those death-drawn lips,<sup>2</sup> those ruddy cheeks, the light, the merriment,

<sup>1</sup> He *may* have rented it before, but I expect that the former house, in Henley Street, in which John Shakespeare dwelt, would have a better claim to be the “birthplace,” if it were now known.

<sup>2</sup> We may mention—on the authority of Mr. Butcher, the very courteous clerk of Stratford Church, who saw the examination made—that two years ago Mr. Story, the great American sculptor, when at Stratford, made a very careful examination of Shakespeare's bust from a raised scaffolding, and came to the conclusion that the

face of the bust was modelled from a death-mask. The lower part of the face was very death-like; the upper lip elongated and drawn up from the lower one by the shrinking of the nostrils—the first part of the face to “go” after death; the eyebrows were neither of the same length nor on the same level; the depth from the eye to the ear was extraordinary; the cheeks were of different shapes, the left one being the more prominent at top. On the whole, Mr. Story felt certain of the bust being made from a death-mask.

the tenderness, the wisdom, and love that once was theirs ; walk by the full and quiet Avon's side, where the swan sails gently, by which the cattle feed ; ask yourself what word sums up your feelings on these scenes : and answer, with me, " Peace ! "

Next morning, walk up the Welcombe road, across the old common lands whose inclosing Shakespeare said " he was not able to bear : " when up Rowley Bank, turn round ; see the town nestle under its circling hills, shut in on the left by its green wall of trees. The corn is golden beside you. Meon Hill meets the sky in your front ; its shoulder slants sharply to the spire of the church where Shakespeare's dust lies : away on the right is Broadway, lit with the sun ; below it the ridge of Roomer Hill, yellow for harvest on the right, passing leftwards into a dark belt of trees to the church, their hollows filled with blue haze. In this nest is Shakespeare's town. After gazing your fill on the fair scene before you, walk to the boat-place, paddle out for the best view of the elm-framed church, then by its river-bordered side to the stream below ; get a beautiful view of the tower through a vista of trees beyond the low waterfall ; then pass by cattle half-knee deep in the shallows, sluggishly whisking their tails, happily chewing the cud ; go under Wire-Brake bank, whose trees droop down to the river, whose wood-pigeons greet you with coos ; past many groups of grey willows, with showers of wild roses between ; feathery reeds rise beside you, birds twitter about, the sky is blue overhead, your boat glides smoothly down stream : you feel the sweet content with which Shakespeare must have lookt on the scene. Later you wander to Shottery, to Ann Hathaway's cottage, where perchance in hot youth the poet made love. Then you ride through Charlecote's tall-elm'd park, and see the deer, whose ancestors he may have stolen ; on to Warwick with its castle rising grandly from Avon bank ; back to Stratford, with a glorious view from the hill on the left in your homeward ride. Evening comes : you stroll again by the riverside, through groups of townfolk pleasant to see, in well-to-do Sunday dress. From Cross-ò'-th'-Hill you look at the fine view of church and town, backt by the Welcombe Hills ; through Wire Brake, and ripe corn, you walk to the bridge that brings you to the opposite level bank of the stream. Then you lie down, chatting of Shakespeare to your friend, while lovers in pairs pass lingeringly by, and the twilight comes. Then again you say that the peace of the place was fit for Shakespeare's end, and that the memory of its quiet beauty will never away from your mind.

Yes, Stratford will help you to understand Shakespeare.

F. J. FURNIVALL.—*The Succession of Shakespeare's Works (Introduction to Gervinus's Commentaries, ed. 1875), pp. xlvi.—xlvi.*

## WORTH OF SHAKESPEARE TO THE ENGLISH NATION.

WELL, this is our poor Warwickshire Peasant who rose to be Manager of a Playhouse, so that he could live without begging ; whom the Earl of Southampton cast some kind glances on ; whom Sir Thomas Lucy, many thanks to him, was for sending to the treadmill ! We did not account him a god like Odin, while he dwelt with us ;—on which point there were much to be said. But I will say rather, or repeat : In spite of the sad state Hero-worship now lies in, consider what this Shakespeare has actually become among us. Which Englishman we ever made, in this land of ours, which million of Englishmen, would we not give up rather than the Stratford Peasant ? There is no regiment of highest dignitaries that we would sell him for. He is the grandest thing we have yet done. For our honour among foreign nations, as an ornament to our English household, what item is there that we would not surrender rather than him ? Consider now, if they asked us : Will you give up your Indian Empire or your Shakespeare, you English ; never have had any Indian Empire, or never have had any Shakespeare ? Really it were a grave question. Official persons would answer doubtless in official language ; but we, for our part too, should not we be forced to answer : Indian Empire or no Indian Empire ; we cannot do without our Shakespeare : Indian Empire will go, at any rate, some day ; but this Shakespeare does not go, he lasts for ever with us ; we cannot give up our Shakespeare.

Nay, apart from spiritualities ; and considering him merely as a real marketable, tangibly-useful possession. England, before long, this Island of ours, will hold but a small fraction of the English ; in America, in New Holland, east and west to the very Antipodes, there will be a Saxondom covering great spaces of the globe. And now, what is it that can keep all these together into virtually one Nation, so that they do not fall out and fight, but live at peace, in brotherlike intercourse, helping one another ? This is justly regarded as the greatest practical problem, the thing all manner of sovereignties and governments are here to accomplish : what is it that will accomplish this ? Act of Parliament, administrative prime ministers cannot. America is parted from us, so far as Parliament could part it. Call it not fantastic, for there is much reality in it : Here, I say, is an English king, whom no time or chance, Parliament or combination of Parliaments, can dethrone ! This king, Shakespeare, does not he shine, in crowned sovereignty over us all, as the noblest, gentlest, yet strongest of rallying signs ; indestructible ; really more valuable in that point of view than any other means or appliance whatsoever ? We can fancy him as radiant aloft over all the nations of Englishmen, a thousand years hence. From Paramatta, from New York, wheresoever, under what sort of Parish-Constable soever, English men and women are, they will say to one another :

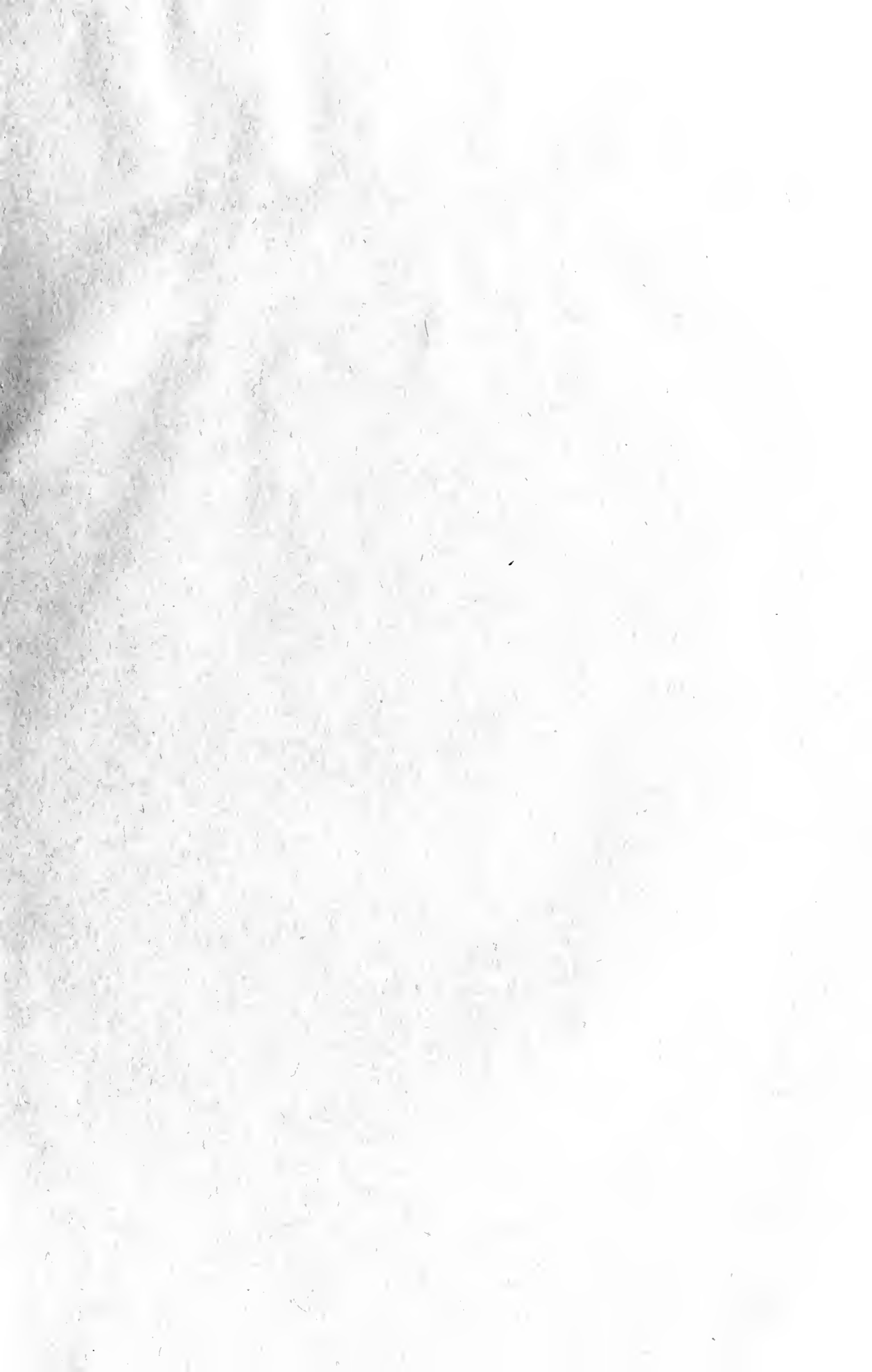
“Yes, this Shakespeare is ours ; we produced him, we speak and think by him ; we are of one blood and kind with him.” The most common-sense politician, too, if he pleases may think of that.

Yes, truly, it is a great thing for a nation that it get an articulate voice ; that it produce a man who will speak forth melodiously what the heart of it means. Italy, for example, poor Italy lies dismembered, scattered asunder, not appearing in any protocol or treaty as a unity at all ; yet the *noble* Italy is actually *one* : Italy produced its Dante ; Italy can speak ! The Czar of all the Russias, he is strong, with so many bayonets, Cossacks, and cannons ; and does a great feat in keeping such a tract of earth politically together ; but he cannot yet speak. Something great in him, but it is a dumb greatness. He has had no voice of genius to be heard of all men and times. He must learn to speak. He is a great dumb monster hitherto. His cannons and Cossacks will all have rusted into non-entity, while that Dante's voice is still audible. The Nation that has a Dante is bound together as no dumb Russia can be.—We must here end what we had to say of the *Hero-Poet*.

THOMAS CARLYLE.—*Lectures on Heroes*. Lecture III. : *The Hero as Poet*.







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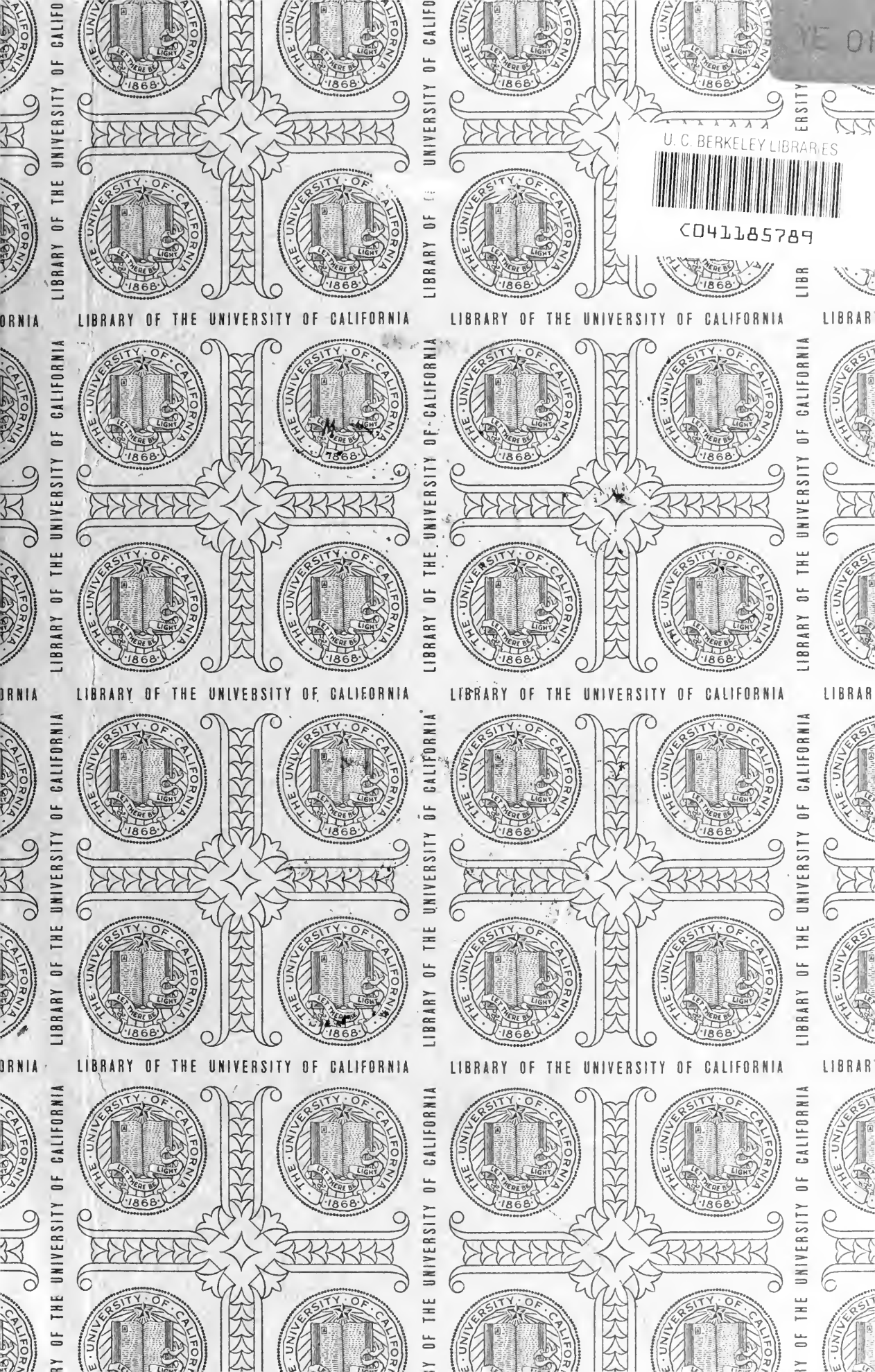
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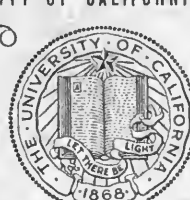
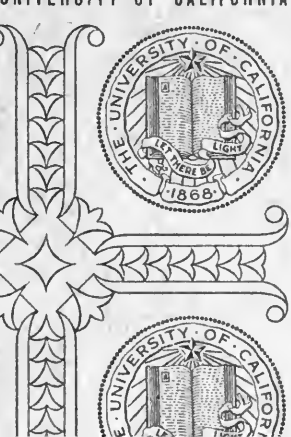
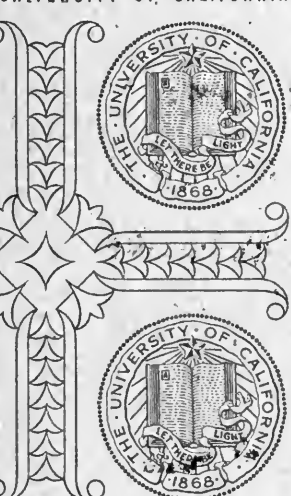
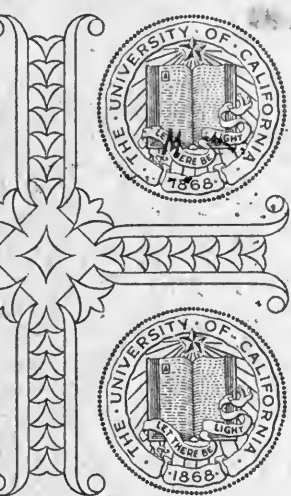
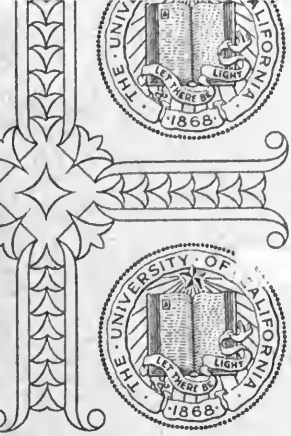


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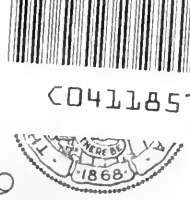
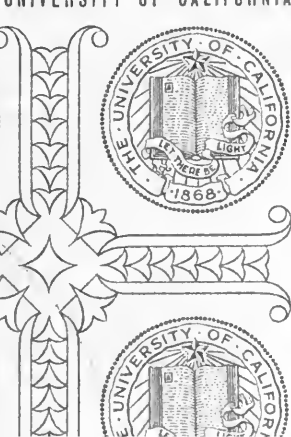
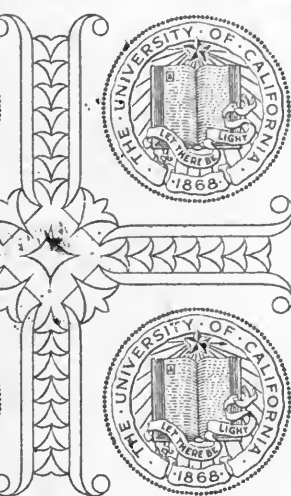


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